

INTERVIEW WITH JEAN SMITH
6 June 2000
Updated 4/1/10 using timecode from tape 18_BC_DV
Topics in Bold
I = Interviewer R = Respondent

SIDE A

I ... for camera, Tape 9 for DAT, both at the beginning. It's 6 June 2000, Trish FitzSimons recording, Erica Addis on camera, and we're recording Jean Smith in the kitchen of the Bedourie Hotel and Post Office. TAPE 18_BC_DV

So Jean, I'd like you to tell me where and when you were born and whatever you know about the circumstances of your birth, and what your name was when you were born.

R Childbirth

00:01:12:00 Yes, well, I was the last one of seven. My sister's 92. She lives in Charters Towers. She went to Adelaide the other day. And two brothers, the older ones have passed on. There's three boys left now and I was born in Adelaide. I think it was Queen Victoria Hospital. It's ummm, the racecourse there, there's a racecourse out, one of my sons was born there too, Donny. Anyway, Jean Lois Scobie was my name, Scobie from the Marree-Birdsville Track. And I was the only one, only one born in Adelaide, and Mum wasn't very well. She nearly died, I think, and lucky I'm still alive because the old sister said, 'Oh, it's a girl, we'll save it', so they saved me. My sister Ethel, she was looking after the rest of the children, you know, with Dad up at Ooroowilanie, 120 miles north of Marree it was. But she was 18 then when I was born.

I Your elder sister?

R 00:02:20:09 Mmmm. Yes. She was looking after the family. Gordon was only three years and three months when I was born and the others, of course, he was next to me. He's over at Hammond Downs now and he went to Windorah with one of my sons and daughter-in-law.

I So how old would your mother have been when you were born?

R **Gender Relations/Marriage**

00:02:40:05 Mother was 40. Dad was ... me Mum was 40, Dad was just on 50, about nine years, you know, in those days the men always married the younger women, didn't they? 'Cause they do now, too, I suppose, if men have got money, they figure the women will cotton to it. Oh, although Dad didn't. His father opened up the Track as far as Ooroowilanie, oh and out on the Kelly Cooper, too, with Welsh who was a well sinker and he was a stonemason. Some of those houses that he built are still there, parts of them, you know, with the roof off them and the place Dad built, it's been pulled down to stone one of the sand hills there. They're all only sand hill and, well, they don't use that road now so they pulled the house down for nothing. There's still the pile of stones there, yet, that he didn't ... you know, he cut all the stone and ... neatly, and made built the house. 00:03:36:17

I So your father, your son was living in Ooroowilanie...

R Oora ... Ooroowilanie.

I Oora ...

R Ooroowilanie. It's just the other side of Mungeranie. 18 miles. Mungeranie Service Station there. It's 18 miles the other side.

I So was your Dad sinking wells and ...?

R **Housing**

00:03:56:10 No, not my Dad, my granddad. I never knew my granddad. I knew both my grannies but not my grandfathers. They were dead before I can remember, you know, I can't remember them. My Dad wasn't a well sinker but he was ... although I think he had his brother and his father to help him build the house, you know, their stone house was good too. But to begin with, they lived in a bush shed, me Mum and them. Ethel said she could still remember the grass shed and that. Yeah. 'Cause I can't.

I Had your Mum come from Adelaide to Ooroowilanie?

R 00:04:33:20 No. Mum didn't. Mum's father was Frank Booth. He was a wonderful horseman, Frank Booth, yeah. And his son was, too. I didn't know Grandfather, of course, but I knew one of Mum's brothers, Mum's favourite brother was Frank. She had younger brothers and that. But, oh gee, he was a wonderful horseman. I saw him one day, he was riding this race horse and leading two, and I had to stop and watch him. They were dancing everywhere and he was smoking a cigarette and, oh, you know. Yeah. He was a marvellous horseman. He stayed up at Anna Creek until he was about, oh he was over 80. Then he went down to Port Augusta with one of his granddaughters, I think, looked after him there.

I So what do you reckon is your earliest memory from Ooroowilanie?

R **Childhood/Women/Land/Fire**

00:05:23:00 Ooroowilanie. Oh, I don't know, really, running around the sand hills after the rain, and beautiful flowers. See, we were on the edge of the, edge of the Stony Desert, Sturt's Stony Desert, on the southern edge and the eastern edge of the Simpson. We had swings under the trees, just down at the sand hill there, about, I suppose it'd be 100 yards if it was that. Gordon used to get on the swings and when he'd jump off half his trousers would stay on the nail. He'd come up and Mum would always now. He'd sort of back around his trousers 'Ah, well, let me see how much you've torn them this time,' Mum'd say. Yeah, Mum's people, they had hotels. They were burnt out twice and it's a funny thing, I'm terrified of fire but yet, I think Mum might have been and she sort of told me about it.

I So where were those hotels?

R Well I'm not too sure.

I So, Jean, that's interesting. I'm interested in some of your mother's sayings. She just told me one of them, that I'd like you to tell me on tape, and tell me what else your mother told you, to guide you through the world.

R 00:06:40:04 Oh, yeah, well she said, 'When you get old,' she said, 'the doctors can't be bothered with you'. She said, 'When I went to the doctor's once,' she said – she hardly ever went at all, she had her appendix out once and that's about all she was in hospital – but she said, 'He said, "Oh, you're well worn"', and she said, 'Yes, and sometimes I feel ...'. He said, 'Oh, you've worn well,' and she said, 'Yes and sometimes I feel well worn'.

I What were other sayings of your mother's?

R **Droving/Childhood**

00:07:12:10 Oh, I don't know. Dad, now they've got a tape out about Dad. He's supposed to have tilted his chair back, see, well he wouldn't dare do that because Mum would just say, 'Alec!' and he would put the chair back down again. He wouldn't have ... 'Dad' she used to call him. 'See Dad.' Anything, 'Go and ask your father. If you want to ride that horse, ask your father,' she'd say straight away. Anyway, Dad ... there was this tape they've got out, they've got he sat back or something, he sat back in his chair. Well, Dad never did that, you know. No, he'd never do that.

I So the Scobies were a mob to be reckoned with on the Birdsville Track, were they?

R 00:07:53:06 Oh, I don't know. They were there but, you know, Gordon and I used to follow up the drovers. Sometimes when the drovers would go, you know, to see what they'd write on the, see the bleached heads of the bullocks. They used to write poetry on them and we used to follow, so if one went down, like old Cy Dunny he's a good old poet, we used to follow the mob down. Oh, not, you know, a couple of days after, and we'd read them. One said, 'Here I lie in Scobie's run, flogged to death by his eldest son'. Gets down to the whip cladder see Dad was a Scobie whip, you know, he used to make that and, 'cause they never flogged bullocks at all. Then there was another one, 'Here I lie, my soul's in hell, my calf's been pinched by old Dave Bell . Oh, that's all I can remember. There were some there, too, that you wouldn't want to remember, you know, a bit rude they were. 00:08:44:00

I Come on, tell us about them.

R 00:08:45:08 No, well I can't remember those, you know. Gordon would be able to. Oh, he's ... and then there was a piece of poetry made up, *The Cuff and Collar Crowd* it was called, about Dad. He took on droving after a while, you know, when I was little. I was about seven, I suppose, six or seven, he took on droving then and made this bit of poetry up about him. Wirey whiskered(?) and Billy was in it, that's Billy Elston, he was a drover too.

I So what brought you to the Channel Country Jean?

R **Arriving in Channel Country/Childhood/Educational/Work**

00:09:18:06 Oh, well, see, Mum and Dad didn't want ... I was 17 and on my 17th birthday I went up to Ethel. I come up with old Tom Kruse, you know the name, used to run the mail there, and because it was, well it was too lonely there. I was 17, see we had to run round the sand hills with no boots on and I never liked wearing shoes. I had to wear them when we went to Marree about once a year but I wouldn't wear them at home, just wouldn't. That's why I've got short broad feet like a camel. Yes, ah, well Mum sent me up there. I think, I think that they wanted to take me to the war, I think. Well I would have been no good. I was innocent, I knew nothing, they'd have kidded me over it, you know. So I think that might have been the reason, they never said. I don't know but it was wartime then. And also, see, I think I was about six, I don't know how old I was when the Japanese, they, that Mum and Dad were worried about that too. See Mum was a great one on the news, see. She used to listen. And when Bob Mensies sent all that scrap iron over to Japan, she said, 'Dad, that'll be fired back on us soon', and sure enough it was. Everything Mum said was back. It was right. She was a great one on the news 'cause she'd taught her children for years. She taught me for, oh, nine-and-a-half years, you know, educated me. 00:10:51:20

I So all your education had come from your mother?

R 00:10:55:08 Yeah, well we did have a teacher, a man teacher, Reg Bell from Dulkanenna(?), and we had him for a while but, see, they never stayed. Oh they'd stay twelve months and that but it's a lonely place. Saw the mail every fortnight, that's all, and drovers, of course, but there was a lot of them in those days.

I Tell us about Tom Kruse. What was he like?

R 00:11:16:18 Oh, Tom. Oh, he was a great old fellow. He's still down there in Adelaide. He was up in Birdsville not long ago. He came up here to see us and then he'd come to town for a while. Yeah. Oh, he was a wonderful fellow, old Tom. Always joking, you know. Everything was a joke to him. Yeah.

I Tell us a Tom Kruse joke.

R 00:11:36:02 Oh, no, not really, but he was always smiling, you know. Yeah. And Dad, Dad went up with him once and they were away for a fortnight and we didn't know where they were. Mum thought Dad was dead and all, but Tom was that strong, he could lift a 44-gallon of petrol up onto the truck, you know, it was terrific strength. Yeah. He was a great fellow, Tom. His brother Curly was killed opening a gate at night, I think it was, and the car, truck ran back on him and squashed him. He was 21 then.

I So when you say your parents sent you to the Channel Country maybe because they wanted you to go to the war ...

R **Childhood**

00:12:19:12 No, they didn't want me to go to the war. That was the point, they didn't want me to go. No. I would have been no use at all. I knew nothing. Even now, I think that kids of twelve know more than I do, you know. You're reared in the bush. All you have in the bush is old drovers and they were all gentlemen, you know, all very respectable.

I So do you think your parents were afraid that manpower would ...?

R 00:12:49:00 Yeah, probably. It might have been, I don't know, see, why, but it might have been that. Mmmm. They sent me up there to Ethel then. Oh, to help Ethel, too, I suppose. She was working up there, cooking and that, on the station.

I So Ethel was your elder sister who was eighteen years older?

R 00:13:05:10 Mmmm. She's 92. On 17 March, she was 92. Still drives her car, yet she's thinking of giving it up, though, she said, because it costs too much, she reckons.

I So where was Ethel, exactly?

R Davenport Downs, over there. Frank managed there, her husband.

I Now I can't picture Davenport Downs on the map. Tell me what town it's closest to.

R 00:13:30:20 Ummm. Oh, well, I think it'd be closest to Winton, or this place, it's fairly close to. It's a fair way away. It's over the other side of the Diamantina, Davenport.

I So between Diamantina Lakes and Winton?

R Yes. No, no. It's between Diamantina Lakes and Monkira. It's about 80 miles straight up the river from, oh straight down the river, to Monkira, from Davenport to Monkira.

I So tell me what your first image of the Channel Country was.

R **Fear/Water**

00:13:58:02 Oh, when I came up here. Well, I was 21 then, when I came up here to this but over there, see, it was safer. We were pretty safe there but up here, I had to come up here to work at the hotel and we came to Clooney and we had to boat across. It was night time, dark and I was frightened of the water too. Jack Clancy and the two, the old black couple from here, Nora and Jack, he was the, you know the Aboriginal sort of, was the policeman. He used to ...

I Native police?

R 00:14:34:00 Yeah, he was with the white police but he used to live up there with old Nora. And they come over and Jack Clancy, and Cameron went up there and he didn't but he was working it, leasing it then, but he owned it after. Anyway, we had to get in the boat then and go across this river at night. Gawd, I made out I wasn't frightened. I tell you what, I was terrified. Then we got across the river and they gave me this horse to ride and I was right then, until we got here, until we got to this river, and we had to boat across again. Oh, that was no good. No, I don't like the rivers. They're not ... I don't like them at all. I can swim, though, good.

I So as a child, had you seen the sea ever?

R 00:15:17:00 Ah, yes, I did. I went down to the Inland Mission camp once. Australian Inland Mission camp. I don't know how old I was, about 11 I think. I wouldn't go in it, though. I used, I got into such a lot of trouble for not going swimming in the sea. I just wouldn't. I was too frightened. I'm still afraid of a big stretch of water, you never know what's going to come out of that water. See. But I could swim really good, and float and everything, but I learnt that in the dam at home. In the big dam there. They sunk it with horses and bullocks, oh before I was born, of course, a long time.

I So what had made you leave Davenport and come here to Bedourie?

R **Alcohol**

00:16:59:12 Well I left Davenport because, I don't know really. I went down ... oh, I know, I went down home and Ethel said I could go and have a change, you know, somewhere, and when I came back Ron and Sue Michel, they said they wanted me at Betoota, see, and we knew Ron and Sue really well so I got as far as Birdsville with old Tom Kruse again, got as far as Birdsville and couldn't get up there because of the rivers, see, the big rain. Couldn't get up to Betoota so then I stayed in Birdsville then. And then after I had my 21st birthday there in the hotel in Birdsville, Phil Morton and, she was Phil Speech then but she married Lionel but they were

all there and Mr Gumpton and Mrs Gumpton and they were partying there and I went to sleep. I didn't drink, I never did. I never did drink, never, ever.

I So what year would this have been when you were turning 21?

R Oh, goodness, I don't know what year it was but I'm 74 now so ...

I So you must have been ...

R 00:17:07:12 In May. In May, I don't know what year it was. I forget now. I don't sort of follow the years much. Usually old people do, you know, they know all the years, what happened a certain year, but I don't. I think it's because I was in the hotel here for so long and, you know, about twenty years, over twenty years, you know. Not now couldn't be bothered thinking after that. Then I came up here before I was 22.

I So when you got to Birdsville, then, I think it would have been about 1945, war just ending. Does that make sense?

R Yeah. I think so, '45.

I Did the Second World War make much impact on your life? Like, was the fact that this war was going on ...?

R 00:17:53:20 Oh, yeah, it's so unnecessary, isn't it? All the fighting. Look at that overseas now, it's disgusting. Absolutely ... and that fellow over there, there's one man like Hitler, one man can say that all the rest have got to die, you may as well say. Well, why don't they just pot him over and be done with it? He knows he's safe, that's why he's so cheeky. It's terrible. I think war is a dreadful thing. So many people died. Uncle Mick was at the war. He was at Gallipoli. He came home but, of course, he was no good, you know. I remember seeing him once and he couldn't walk any more, any further than, oh just a little way, hardly from here to the bar. That was after the First World War that must have been, mustn't it, after that?

I So this was about '45, you came up with Tom Kruse to Birdsville ...

R Mmmm, again, yes.

I ... and the rivers were up that year.

R When I was 22. Yes. Yeah, the rivers were up then.

I So what was Birdsville like in 1945?

R **Braided Channels**

00:19:04:00 Oh, well I think it was a nicer place than it is now. Mmmm, it was just a few ... it was a bush town, you know, and Dorothy, I think she had the Post Office then, when I came up when I was 17, Dorothy, David Brooks' mother. She had the Post Office. She was a lovely woman, Dorothy. See, the two sisters, they were Smiths too. There was Ella in Birdsville and Rose here. Well, they married two brothers, Jack in Birdsville and George here. Gaffneys, you know. And Barry's in Birdsville now. That is, George and Rose Gaffney's son, grandson. He lives in Birdsville, Barry, at the Post Office there. He's married.

I And was that around the time that you met Linda Crombie?

R **Work/Pubs**

00:19:54:08 Yes, when I ... yes, then when I was about twenty ... no, yeah, oh I was about twenty I was, yeah, then. And all the family was shocked that I went to work at a hotel but I was pleased I did because I learnt a lot there. They had parties and you had to, and I'd be waiting inside for the tea. I thought they only had a party race time, see, because we used to go sometimes to the races. Bland Oldfield, he was ... two of his brothers married two of my cousins, the Scobie girls from Mulka. Anyway, old Mulka, he came out, he said, 'What are you doin' here?' I said, 'I'm waiting for you to come and have tea'. It was about 11 o'clock. 'Oh,' he said, 'girl, go to bed,' he said. 'We're having a party in there.' 'But,' I said, 'I thought you only had parties when you were race time,' and he said, 'Oh, no, don't be silly'. I liked old Bland, you know. 00:20:42:12

I So what was it like to work in the pub as a 21-year-old girl that didn't drink at all?

R **Riding**

00:20:51:05 Oh, it was good. Oh, good. No, I wouldn't drink, no. No, I worked for one of those Oldfields, Jim, married Ida, my cousin. Well, his sister, see, was there. She had the ... she was in the hotel there and she was good. She taught me to make paper roses and all, and I used to get up at 3 o'clock in the morning and go and train Billy Brook's race mare, oh ride her, you know, not training her but ... 'cause he used to take her, sometimes Billy Brook would go out and he'd be away for a full day, you know, and she'd be straight out of the stable, too, and, you know, no exercise, so I asked them and they said, 'Yeah, you can take her out,' so I used to take her out. Alert, beautiful big mare, she was. Yeah.

I So had you grown up riding?

R 00:21:34:08 Yeah. Mmmm. Oh, yes, we did a fair bit, yeah. Yes, I wouldn't take her near the racecourse, though. She won the Cup once or twice. I wouldn't take her near the racecourse. I couldn't hold her if I did. All horses, I could hold 'em, but not her. I couldn't. So I kept her away from the racecourse.

I Somebody told me recently that in Birdsville there was much more mixing, black and white, lots of intermarriages between Aboriginal people and white people. Is that how you found Birdsville?

R Oh, now.

I No ...

R **Water/Race Relations: Connection to white kids/Women/Land**

00:22:14:10 No, no, no, not then. When I was up there, I liked them all, because they used to come past down home, you know. See, it was, we never had permanent water at home. There was a bore at Mungaranie and then 18 miles to home, and then 9 miles to the other bore, the Mulcha bore.

New well it was called. But Mulka bore. And they used to always walk down home and they'd have dinner or something there and Mum used to say, 'Come in the verandah and have it,' and 'No, missus, if you don't mind, we'll go out on the wood heap and can we use some of your chips to make a smoke?' Mum would say, 'Yes' because there were hundreds of, oh big piles, chips, you know, there. Mum said, 'Well, all right then,' and they used to go out and make a smoke and Mum would give them dinner, and dinner there, and talk. Oh, happy people. God, they were happy people, you know. And they used to be on the stations here too, round here, and you'd hear music and singing and everything, you know, until someone took 'em grog. And then it was no good. But, oh, they were nice people. They used to come past home and I'd go and talk. So kind, you know, black ones, to children. Still are too. Yeah. But they were really good people. It's spoilt a bit now. 00:23:28:15

I Were they going past your place droving or ...?

R 00:28:34:14 No, no, just walking. Walkabout, you know. Walkabout from one station to the relations down at the other place. Yeah, just goin' walkabout, that's all. I was always curious, there was one white one, and I could never find out. She spoke like a real lady. From the Mission, you know, Killapaninna. I've often wondered who she was. I forget what they called her now. I don't know. But she was quite white. She had white hair, perhaps that made her look whiter, eh? Grey hair, I think. Yeah. See [Kalalpaninna?] Mission, that was finished before, I can't remember it even. I can remember going there once when I was about three and it was all sanded up then. I was three or four. The sand was there. The [Bogulseins?] had that. Old Mr Bogulsein from Germany, he's buried there.

I And in Birdsville, I think you said before we turned on the tape that you and Linda Crombie became friends.

R **Race Relations**

00:24:31:14 Oh, yes. Yeah, we used to ride round together there. Mmmm. Yeah. I had two young black girls down home used to be ... there was one

was, one was called Bessie. Bessie is Donald Rolands's mother. You know Donald Rolands in Birdsville? Bessie, his mother, we used to play together. Then there was Ivy, another one too, we used to play together. Those are the two friends I had and then after I grew up I met Linda, see, in Birdsville. Linda and Clara, Linda's sister Clara, we used to ride round, oh go out to the Bluff to see Mrs Elsie Morton and back again, you know. 36 miles is nothing.

I And would anybody have frowned upon you, having Aboriginal friends?

R **Race Relations**

00:25:21:00 Oh, no. No. It wouldn't worry me if they had have. Oh, no. They were all right there. They were friends with them, you know, yeah. I've never known when we weren't friends with the black people. Never known it.

I So how did you end up here in Bedourie then?

R 00:24:44:04 Well, that's how I ... oh, Mrs Nixon must have sold the pub, I think, in Birdsville and I shifted out up here then. They wanted me up here so I came up. I think so, I'm not sure. I think she did. Anyway she went to Marree after and she was hemming tea towels, poor old soul, and she died. She's Jimmy Dunn's mother, you know. Jimmy Dunn owned this oh Kallamirna down here, years ago, Jimmy and Joan. They had two sons. I think that's all the children they had was two, Peter and I think. And then they owned this other place up here now, the other side of Mt Isa, but I think Jimmy's retired in Adelaide now, Jimmy and Joan. The boys are up there.

I So in your knowledge, Jean, has it mostly been women that have run the pub out here?

R 00:26:38:06 Well, they've done their fare share of work in them, I know that. Jimmy's running this one. He's working hard in it, too. But he's getting improvements done, you know. He got those units built over there.

He's done a lot to it since he had to give up the trucking. He was truck driving for over twenty years, truck driving.

I Last night we were talking to a woman who knew about the Royal Australian Hotels in Boulia ...

R Oh yes.

I ... and she was describing ...

R Oh, that'd be Jean. Jean Locke. Granny Locke.

I No, it was June ...

R Jackson. Oh, yes. Yeah, June would know.

I And she was describing the shed up the back where the men would come in and just hoist their mattresses ...

R Yeah, throw their swags down.

I Can you describe how that worked in Birdsville?

R 00:27:27:06 Oh, yeah, they used to come in. Oh, they'd camp anywhere, you know. They wouldn't stay at the hotel. Only race time there'd be the women and their husbands stay at the hotel. Oh, no, they used ... sometimes they'd be down the creek or something, you know.

I These would be the white stockmen or drovers?

R 00:27:45:04 Yeah, mmmm. Old Teddy Sheehan, he was a drover and he had this little chestnut horse called Sandy and he used to ride into Birdsville, see, but he'd have ... well, not with the cattle. When he was going up for cattle. He wouldn't drink while he had cattle in hand but when he was going up there, he'd ride Sandy into Birdsville and then he'd be a day or so there and someone would say, 'Well, we'll catch up to plant in the motor car', you know those old wooden spoke ... all right, I'd say let Sandy go and Sandy would go down to where he last saw the horses and then he'd track 'em up. A couple of days, he could track the plant up with the little horse. Little

pony. I used to ride him every time I'd finish. He'd come past Ooroowilanie.

I So you said you left Birdsville when, was it Mrs Burke sold the pub?

R No. What's her name? Linda. Oh, crikey.

I Don't worry.

R Oldfield, yeah. Linda her name was. I'm sure. Jim Oldfield's sister anyway.

I So that pub got sold.

R She was Mrs Dixon then. She was Mrs Dixon then.

I So what brought you to Bedourie? You were looking for work?

R Oh, yeah, I just wanted to come. I'd never been to Bedourie. I wanted to see what it was like, mmmm, so I come up here.

I And what did you discover when you came up here?

R **Gender Relations**

00:29:10:20 Oh, I don't know. I thought it was all right. I used to cook. I was doing the cooking and I used to take Mona and Alan a cup of tea. Then we had Bob and Mabel Laughton, this was in the morning, and I'd take them a cup of tea, and then Alan's brother Len, sometimes I'd take him a cup of tea but I didn't like Len. We didn't get on very well, so one day his foot was sticking out, one morning, sticking out, the rugs in the back of the bed, you know, it was right near the door, and I put his tea down and I got, I hung onto the door and I give his big toe an awful twist and ran out, and I told her, I said, 'I'm not taking him any tea any more. He's young enough to get up and get his own'. Poor old Len. Yeah.

I What had he done to you?

R 00:30:00:18 Oh, nothing, really. Nothing, really, no. We just didn't get on, that's all, didn't agree. Sometimes I'd be coming out in the morning in the dark and I'd run into those posts, you know, running along, bash into those, you know those posts out there, those steel uprights on the verandah. Oh, crikey, I've hit them a few times. Cold mornings when you run, you know.

I So you've lived here in this building for 23 years?

R No, not in this building. Ah, we lived over the road in that old cottage, that old place.

I

R Yes. Yeah, we shifted over here 29 years ago this month. Mmmm. '71 we shifted over here. Was it '71? 29 years, I think. Yes, 29 years.

I And was the Post Office always a part of the pub?

R 00:30:56:18 Yes. Well, as long as I can remember, the Post Office has been the pub. I think it was here right from the start. It was always here. We had an old tin Post Office there and all the tourists used to say, 'Oh, isn't it quaint?' and I used to get so annoyed. So Jimmy built another one. He said, 'For Pete's sake, we'll have another one built' so he built that stone one, he put that on there.

I We've heard people talk about how earlier this century pubs actually would make their own money. Like, I've heard about a Mrs Craigie who, I think, was at Boulia?

R No, she was here, Mrs Craigie. Yes.

I Oh, she was Bedourie, was she?

R Yeah, Bedourie, yeah.

I So tell me what you know about Mrs Craigie.

R **Mrs Craigie/Alcohol/Land/Kidman**

00:31:34:10 Well, I don't know much. When she'd get sick of the drunks, see they'd run out of money, she'd say, 'It's a lovely moonlight night and there's water in the duck hole'. The duck hole's eight miles up, see, well that's a bit, be right, they'd pull out up there and camp and then go on. But she sold the pub. Oh, well, she had her husband, her brother, they owned [Bedolbin?] up here and, see, I think they were given [Bedolbin?]. I'm not sure of this but I think, after they came back from the war, you know, they were giving country to people, the stockmen, and they had [Bedolbin?] and she had the pub, or she ran the pub anyway, and Sir Sidney wanted [Bedolbin?] and they wouldn't sell it to him unless he bought the pub. And I think this is the only pub he ever bought. I think so, I'm not really sure. Anyway, he bought the pub off Mrs Craigie and George Gafney and Rose Gafney went into it.

00:32:27:14

I Now I've heard that when Mrs Craigie sold the pub to Sir Sidney, she managed to leave the Post Office out of the equation so that Sidney Kidman only got the pub and she could still get the money from the Post Office.

R 00:32:43:16 Oh, well, I don't know. No, she didn't live here. I don't know about that. Well, I don't know. Who'd know about that now? Alan and Eileen probably would. Eileen Clancy. She married Jack Clancy. She's one of the daughters. There was Eileen, Alan and Len.

I So was Mrs Craigie still here when you arrived?

R No, goodness me, no. No, no. Gafneys had this for 50 years. Gafneys – George and Rose Gafney had it, and then Alan had it, and then after Alan had it, Len had it, his brother. Yeah.

I But you just grew up hearing stories of Mrs Craigie?

R 00:33:21:16 Oh, yes. Oh, there was lots of stories they used to tell. This old ... the fellow that got killed out on Sandringham about 70 or more years ago, him and one of the other fellows were coming in from Sandringham, see, and they saw a snake up there at Duck Creek and he said, one of them

said, 'We'd better kill that snake'. He said, 'No, leave it, we'll kill him with the nest(?) when we are going home'. Going for a booze up.

I I heard about Mrs Craigie from her niece, Patricia Hodgkinson, who lived down on Mount Leonard.

R Oh, yes. Ohhh.

I Patricia, I think, said Mrs Craigie had had three husbands and at least one of them had died in odd circumstances. Did you ever hear that?

R Craigie. No, no, that was Mount Gason. Well I heard about Mount Gayson but I've never heard about the Craigies. No.

I What was Mount Gason?

R **Tall Tales**

00:34:16:24 Oh, I don't know. It was something there, supposed to have been. This woman was supposed to have given her husband ... I won't tell any names but she's supposed to have given a plate of food to the wrong one. He was an old drover. 'Oh,' she said, 'that's wrong' and she put it in front of her husband and he died shortly after he ate it. It was, oh it was the same stuff as they gave Napoleon Bonaparte. What was he – Napoleon – what was it? Now you can tell it in the hair after.

I Arsenic?

R Arsenic. That's what they reckon. They reckon it was arsenic but whether that's right or not, I wouldn't even know. It's a story I heard but you just don't know if it's right or not. I'm not really interested in it either. Let 'em look after themselves, eh?

I So when you arrived at the pub, then, the Gafneys were here?

R Yes.

I And what was your job?

R Alan Gafney was here then, Alan. He married my husband's sister, Mona, yeah. Oh, I cooked here then, yeah.

I In this very room?

R Yes, it was only ... see, that was how big it was then, from there across to here, just that part of it there, and Jimmy got it fixed up after, made it bigger after.

I So how many people would you have cooked for and what ...?

R 00:35:37:08 Ohhh, I cooked for a married couple, Bob and Mabel Laughton. He owned Camerons, see, he was the one that was at the war and while he was at the war Jack Clancy leased Cameron, and then when he came home he managed Diamantra Lakes. Then when he came over here, Jack bought Hidden Valley up from Winton and he took 600 ... no, he didn't, Bob bought Hidden Valley, that's right, and Jack swapped him then. 600 head of cattle at a hundred and whatever, I don't know, 600 head of cattle was going to be at Hidden Valley, see. Jack's cattle from Cameron. I think it's something like that, I don't know what it was but I know Jack ended up with Hidden Valley and Bob ended up with Cameron. No, Jack ended up with Cameron, that's right. Jack ended up with Cameron because he gave the 600 head of cattle. They swam them across here and I can remember they only lost about six. The river was up and they lost about six head, that's all, in the trees, poor things. But they put the horses across first and then the cattle followed them. That's the best way. It's the only way to cross. Same as if you're yardin' wild cattle, you put the horses behind the yard – not in it, behind it – and the cattle go straight in. But, yeah, that's right.

I So how did you meet your husband, then, Jean?

R **Romance**

00:37 00:22 Oh, he was here. I knew him. His father was droving down the road. Droving down there, old Charlie Smith. He was droving. He managed Cluny for 18 years, old Charlie Smith, and then he said ... they sold

it, see, and he said, 'If I'd known the job wasn't permanent I'd never have taken it'. I don't know, after 18 years and about 11 children. Funny old man he was. Yeah, well ...

I So tell me about meeting your husband and ...

R Oh, no, I'm not interested in that. I knew him for a good while before, like I only just saw him droving down there with his father.

I So how long did you know him before you got married and did you ...?

R 00:37:51:18 Oh, a long time. Oh, a long time. Oh, I don't know how long now. He was only young when he used to go through there with his father, go through the droving, it was a good life. Yeah, we had five children. Five boys. Jimmy, Donny, David, Roy and Maxie.

I Where were your kids born?

R 00:38:15:02 Oh, well Jimmy was born in Birdsville. That's the first one. Donny was born in Adelaide. David was born in Longreach. Roy was born in Port Augusta and Maxie was born in Winton. Roy and Maxie are qualified mechanics. They learnt here in the Shire. They've put a few mechanics through, young people here. My two and then three more, no two more after, four young fellows and there's another fellow now learning, so it's done a fair bit of good.

I So you would stay here till two or three weeks before the babies were due and then you'd go off to a town to a hospital?

R 00:39:00:00 Oh, well, I stayed here before Jimmy was born. I went to Birdsville a week or two, I think, before he was born, and then I went to Adelaide, Donny, I was down there awhile, I don't know how long, three or four weeks I think. And then David in Longreach, I was there about three weeks. That's when Mother had her appendix operation in Adelaide. And then Roy was born in Port Augusta, I wasn't there very long. And Maxie was born in Winton. I was only in there about a day. Max was back here before he was, oh, he wasn't very old. Yeah, we had to camp out the other

side of Boulia there. We got to ... there was no bridge there in Boulia then, and we had to camp, we camped there and then we came around through Springvale next day and then, what's his name, Woods, Colin Milson was there then.

I So you'd go off on your own, or your husband would go with you, when the babies were due?

R No, no, I'd go by myself. He had to work.

I Would your mother, say, have come up to Birdsville for that first baby?

R No. No, I wouldn't have had that. I don't want to be pampered.

I So was that tough, giving birth on your own?

R 00:40:24:10 Oh, I don't know. I don't suppose it was any worse than anything else. I wasn't on my own. Sister, there was a sister there and also a woman that helped her. Miss Rose Nuttall, she was the one that did the housework and Sister Enid Moore was the sister, and then, that was in the morning he was born. The first one to come and see me was Dorothy Brook. She was a Gafney from the pub, you know, David Brook's mother. Her and little David. David's 18 months old and here's this little boy with round blue eyes, too, when he was little. And he was the first one to see Jimmy. His eyes opened a bit bigger too. And then Dr Harvey Sutton, he wasn't long married, and he flew down. Little aeroplanes they had then, you know, just the wings sort of, the ... oh, little aeroplanes, they'd only hold about two or three, and he flew all the way from Mt Isa, no Cloncurry he was then. He was in Cloncurry. He flew all the way from Cloncurry to Birdsville – I was all right, there was nothing wrong with me – just to see that I was all right, you know. 00:41:40:20

I So you felt pretty well looked after?

R Oh, yeah. Oh, yes, then, yes.