

**INTERVIEW WITH MANDY MURRAY**

**20 June 2000**

**Timecode refers to tape 46\_BC\_SP**

**Topics in Bold**

TF = Trish MM = Mandy JH = Julie

OK. **So this is camera tape 46, still DAT Tape 17. The DAT's on 30.58 and this is the second camera tape of our interview with Mandy Murray at Braidwood outside Jundah and it's the 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2000. 46\_BC\_SP**

Um –

MM I'm still trying to think because I know there were so many um –

TF Oh I was going to ask you about the – how Lex handled your fear of the dark and so on. Do you think the fact that he as well would, would have been adjusting to this kind of environment made it easier? You know, like because if he'd grown up here –

MM Mmm.

TF Probably he would have just assumed that you'd stay here on your own for weeks on end like women had always done.

MM **City Girls Go Bush**

22:01:31:00 Yes. I think um he had to adjust because he knew that it, it really upset him that I would get so upset being on my own and he found more and more that he didn't stay out there on the fence line or stay out only if he really really had to. So he would make the times when he came in um much more often and he'd often – so I'd hear him saying to people like, no I can't really you know go out and finish that out there because I can't leave Mandy on her own. And the other thing I found too is, it was the – having to start the generator, and it was the wind system. Um and in, in summer I found I could do it quite well and I used to get quite sort of you know, the pioneer woman and feel really great that I could finally turn it over and get it going. Which was already if Lex was up in the shed or somewhere but it was a bit of a panic if I'd my fifth turn and it still wasn't happening. And I'd start to think of a night with no, no lights and um and so, in winter when I couldn't turn it myself because it's so cold and you really have to move it quite fast, you know that would make it difficult and he would always know that he'd have to leave it running before he left before I got home and all sorts of things so more and

more wouldn't go. But um you know, like just even at night, he likes to go to bed pretty early because he gets up so early and I find at the end of the day I like to have that time, so I've had to learn to go – to accept that I either go to bed when he does and he'll turn out the generator or I'll have, I'll stay up and I'll have to do the trek out to the motor room. And because I was so nervous at going outside, up to the motor room and doing it, I used to take two torches and I'd, so that if anyone was hiding to attack me which it was I, for some reason always think that there's somebody there to attack me, if I had my two torches, it'd look like two people walking along. So, much to the amusement of you know, my sister and a few other people, my two torch thing used to make me feel better anyway. But now I've got much better so I think it is something you can overcome. Um but I do now go out every night on my own and turn it off because I just can't go to bed at 8 o'clock when he does.

22:03:34:02

TF I've met it feels like a lot of very stoic women out here. Like women who've dealt with all kinds of um privations is the first word that comes to mind, and have been determined not to kind of, not to find it difficult or whatever. How did you feel you were accepted by the women who'd grown up here when you arrived? Like things like Lex saying 'I need to be home at night for Mandy', was that difficult in your relationship to other women?

MM 22:04:05:04 Um I think because I came out as the Principal of the school, my relationship to, with the women was different from the start, because I did find when I went on maternity leave and I was out of the school for a while, that the relationship with the women was different then. Because I wasn't the Principal and the teacher of their children and I think um you can't become too close to the women when you are the Principal of the school because you're, you know, you're responsible for all of the children and you don't want to become very good friends with just a couple of the parents, especially in a small town. So um I don't think they actually ever saw me as a country girl any – you know as in I'm now a property girl or anything like that. You know, they saw me as very much the, the teacher and um they weren't expecting that I could handle all those sorts of things. To them I think they were, that was quite normal. That yeah, she's the teacher from town and she's from the city and she can't handle being on her own and yeah. No, they didn't

find that – I didn't ever find that they thought that that was um anything because they expected I think, the teacher from the city not to be as tough as them or something. 22:05:09:18

TF And how did you – what kind of roles did you see primarily for women around you? Like was that, were there any surprises on that front from the kind of marriages or relationships um gender roles that you'd known in Brisbane?

MM **Gender Relations**

22:05:25:05 Um oh I'm always in awe of some of the women here, at the fact that they will spend a day on the fence line working with their husbands and do a really good job. And I know Lex often has commented about some of our neighbours when he's gone and given them a hand doing something and he'll come and he'll just be like going 'Wow, she knows how to dig a post hole' and whatever but he's um never actually expected me to do that because I came out and I was always the teacher and I always had a completely different sort of role. Um and when I go out, he takes me out to sort of show me things and he tends to do the work and I hover around and take photos or watch and now and then I'll hold something or whatever, but I often say to him you know, you've got to teach me these things. But um I, I'm just in awe of some of them because they've taught, they taught, teach their children through School of the Air and they ride motorbikes better than the men and they can muster sheep and move those cattle and you know, I'd quite like to be like that. I think that would be fun, but I think I'd probably do it as a bit of a game and a hobby and then I'd have enough. I have been out with him when I've helped him do some sheep work and after the first hour I'm sort of looking for something different and he'll turn around and say oh we've just got all of them to go, with that same thing that we've been doing for an hour. And there they all are, another seven hours worth. Too, no. Too monotonous. So I thought of it as a bit of fun and you know, run around with the camera and pretend I'm a country girl and then come home to this, go to my job with my books. 22:06:56:12

TF The photography. Was that something – had you always been into photography?

MM **Women/Work**

22:07:01:04 Only as a sort of snap-happy recording every moment of my friends and everything we've ever done. Um you know, the old 'here comes Mandy and her camera again' business. But um of course once I had children, it gave me a whole new you know, subject that I just adored taking children photos and, and the, you know, the life out here and the visitors we've had and everybody comes armed with cameras and we staunch off and take wonderful photos and um over the years I've thought gee, I really just love this photography business and having three small boys in such a short time didn't give me a lot of time to get outside and do photos so a lot of them are of the kids inside and very few and far between when I found time to find the camera. But for Christmas two years ago now that the boys are a bit older, the boys and Lex gave me a um a trip to Brisbane. No children. To do a photography course and to learn how to develop my own photos because I'd always wanted to have a dark room and um and develop my own black and white photos so I came home with lots of new ideas and lots of new dark room equipment and I've set up my own dark room and I'm just now pursuing that as a sort of hobby that I hope maybe one day might lead to something. I don't know. 22:08:10:24

TF And do you think that photography would have been big for you. I mean one never knows. This is sort of hypotheticals. But do you think it would have become big for you in the city? Or is it something about coming to a, a new environment with new eyes, you know? That, that things struck you.

MM **Women/Land**

22:08:27:02 Yes. Hard to know. Hard to know what would've happened if I'd stayed in the city and whether I would have. I tend to think I probably wouldn't because my life would be – I don't know. Yes, you do - I see things here all the time and the opportunities are there. Now whether they would be driving around in and out of the city, I don't know. But I know definitely you know, just being out here, the environment just seems right to um to really capture lots of lovely photos. But not so much that I do a lot of landscape ones, but yes. Something just about the lifestyle. I'd like to say it's really easy going and laid back but I'm always running behind myself but anyway.

TF So give me a typical day for you now Mandy.

MM **Gender Roles/Daily Routine**

22:09:09:04 A typical day for me now is I work two days a week at the school as a teacher, at the one teacher school. Um so a very busy day would be a Monday or a Tuesday when I work. So um Lex would bring me a cup of tea in bed in the morning. The boys come in for their morning cuddle. I lie there thinking I really should be up getting ready because I know I'll be late if I don't get up now, but those cuddles are hard to resist and I end up thinking 'too bad, I'll be late'. Um and rushing around getting all their lunches. Organising the two little ones to go to the – have the day care Mum either come here or they go to her house. Um organising my lunch and Jack's lunch and getting Jack to do his um check what he needs for school for the day. Rushing off, dropping the kids at the day care Mum. Going to school. Um teaching the school for the day. Coming home. Picking up the boys. Coming home. Um watering the garden. Washing the – any wet sheets to make they're dry for the night, because of course I can't do that in the morning because there's no power so I have to wait 'til I come home. Start the generator. Put the sheets on. Um make any phone calls or anything that I have to do if I can. The boys are pretty demanding and usually the time just flies with things that we're doing. Um oh, getting dinner. Helping Lex chop the wood. Bring the wood in for the fire at the moment in the winter because it's cold. Um organising my work for the next day. Organising Jack's homework. Ah Jed also has, has been some speech therapy so some days I have had had to do speech with him. Joe's doing School of the Air Pre-School so he sort of needs a bit of his pre-school time as well. So I try and fit that in every day if I can. Um and then after dinner we always read the boys a, a story and Lex and I help tidy up the kitchen and put them all to bed. But it doesn't sound that busy but for some reason it really is. 22:11:14:04

TF It sounds, I mean to me it sounds incredibly busy, because it sounds like a day not unlike the one I would have in –

MM Mmm. In the city.

TF In the city. Plus the kind of the generator and the chopping wood and the School of the Air Pre-School. Is there a way in which you've tried to maintain the kind of life style you would have had, have – you would have had in the city plus the kind of the country things? Like how have you worked out –

MM Being in the city things?

TF Yeah.

MM **Women/Land**

22:11:46:02 Um, I don't know whether we – I try and bring in city type things necessarily into the home here but we definitely make sure that we all go away several times a year. I've been working on Lex over the years and he's getting much better at leaving the place and coming, um because I definitely think that I'd like them to see more than just living in Jundah. Um we, we go to Noosa every year for a holiday. Um we've been going camping over at Humpy Island with some friends the last few years to, because we both were camping kids as – when we were children we did a lot of camping. Um in the city you know, they've now experienced their first movie theatre and um we take them out to a restaurant always when we go away and they drag around the shops with me as well which they don't like as much as I do. Um I didn't get my little girl shopper that could be my partner but – and the boys don't seem to be that keen and um of course they've got their city cousins and all of our friends' children that they see quite regularly because either, either down there or they've come out here. And when they come here they spend a week so they really get to see, and spend a lot of time together. So, yes, I don't know really whether I make their life style out here – not, not consciously anyway, but perhaps things that we talk about sometimes – I know I've talked to Jack some days about driving to school and I said to him one day, this is the most beautiful drive to school. We've got 8 kilometres where we pass emus, wedgetailed eagles dragging bits of kangaroo off a road to have their meal for the day. A family of pigs will run along. Brolgas will be doing their mating dance in one of the river beds. Um the sky's beautiful and blue. We don't pass another car. The countryside is that gorgeous sage green. The soil is red. You know, the colours are fantastic. We all sit and chat in the car or sing, sing along with whatever's on. Um and I just know that in the city, you know my sisters and whatever in, they're driving in traffic and the kids and you know, it's just chaos. And it's a horrible drive. And I have this beautiful drive. 22:13:56:10

TF I mean I have to – it is incredibly beautiful. You are of course what I've had described to me as the best season in 20 years.

MM Mmm.

TF You know, how's it been like experiencing the other side of this environment?

The you know, the years when –

MM Bad times.

TF There's several years on end of drought and that sort of thing.

MM **Droughts/Flood/Facilities**

22:14:16:08 Yes well, fairly horrific, because when I came in and I was battling the heat and no air conditioning and no power and the donkey for the hot water and um you know, there was no grass growing. There was animals dying. The wool floor price was pulled out of the, the wool industry, and the wool industry started crashing. Um cattle prices had dropped and you know, I used to think why, why are here? Why are we doing this? And then the drought went on and on and on and of course the wool industry didn't come back and it, it seemed to be a really struggle. Everybody seemed very sad and, and everybody was struggling and everybody around us – I think I used to really love going to the city then and just being, living in fantasy for a while where we didn't have to think about it. But it was tough, um, tougher, so much tougher for other people I think than us. We seemed to get through it OK. We've got the river just nearby. We could pump and have a green lawn and I think, Lex used to come home from school, from work, where he'd work in this barren dry you know, wondering where his stock were feeding from, and he'd say you know, it's like coming home to an oasis. And it, it gave him a lift every afternoon to come home and see a bit of green and um and it'd give him the strength to go back out there again I think the next day. But he'd, you know, you'd see some and hear some terrible things. I think the flood years were quite amazing. The first three years I was here, we had 12 floods and of course I was the Principal of the school here and I had to get to work. No matter what, I had to be there. Um, Lex would fly me in the ultra light and I'd fly into school and land on the airstrip or um at one stage we'd land just on the road outside the school or up at the golf course and everybody would ring the school to say what's the flood doing, you know, today because I'd be up in the air and I'd see all the markers and – that was really good. And um he'd fly me back and forwards and then we'd also boat home on a Friday. He'd boat across because we'd bring everybody's gas cylinders and mail and groceries. All the properties on this side, you know? And they'd all rely on the barge

would come over with all of the things and it was really quite funny for us. For a long time there, the radio would ring and people would say what time's the boat leaving in the morning. Like it was you know, a regular bus run or something. Um so 12 floods in the first three years and then drought. And drought for 7-8 years which was really hard because I'd had this, you know green, green grass. Um so what we're enjoying at the moment is just sort of, almost scary because you know it won't last forever and we'll go back to that. I find that sort of almost scary. To enjoy, to allow yourself to enjoy it. To be this nice. Because you know that you're going to have to go back to that other one day. 22:16:54:00

TF So is there a way that the mood of the community almost mirrors the land around it? You know –

MM 22:17:01:20 For sure. I think definitely everybody's spirits have been lifted in the last two years and especially this year um just, just a bit of pressure off everybody I think has made – without anybody actually just sort of talking about that, now that you've mentioned it I think yes, actually everybody does seem a lot happier and getting on with things and I think, you know, the managers, the, the property, the graziers on their properties that manage their properties and make their goals and their plans, it's very depressing year after year to see that those things aren't coming off. And then to head a season that's good and prices that are good with the cattle and to see them now being able to sort of get that fencing going and you know, it just lifts them to think well now I've sort of got a property that's um getting some improvements done. Nothing's been done for so long.

TF Presumably financially it has a huge impact on the town as well?

MM 22:17:56:04 Yes. Yes, well I guess in the town it would with the local businesses. I mean, I don't know financially really how better or worse that would be for them but um tourism I'm sure, I'm sure would improve with a better season. People come out here and um so the town would flourish a bit better then but I'm sure the graziers are all spending a bit more money. I know I'm trying to. Our list, our list we've had for 7 years, we've started ticking a few things off now. You know, we've waited for this time so –

TF And power. Are you involved in the Women for Power Organisation?

MM **Women For Power**

22:18:33:23 Not so much as in involved with them. I mean I'm there for whatever they need me to do but unfortunately I've just, haven't really found enough time to, to write part of their book and, and whatever but um I'm definitely you know, a supporter of theirs and you know, just so thankful with what they're doing because there have been different people out here that have pushed for a certain number of years and then sort of almost had to go on with other things. So it's lovely that these ladies have sort of been the next group to push. I did um I did go to Parliament House with my baby Jed at aged 2 I think he was, sitting on my lap and Vaughan Johnson, the local Member, had asked me to meet him in Brisbane. We were both going to be down there at the same time so he thought this would be a good opportunity to go along and we sat in the desk with a beautiful oak desk and Jed had his Vegemite sandwich that he was wiping on the desk. And I told a few stories about having three children. What with a vomiting bug through the night Lex was away. Um and I had tor – a torch, and of course the first child that vomited, I didn't rush out and put the generator on to have lights because I thought this was it. Fixed him up. Cleaned him up and then the next one started. And from then on I was so busy all night, that the, that there just wasn't a chance to go and put the generator on so I actually end up - in hindsight I should have put it on right at the beginning because I was up all night changing sheets and towels with these three very sick boys that last, you know, it only lasted that night and they were all riding their bikes by 8 o'clock the next morning but um it was very difficult to handle with, with torch light being here on my own and I couldn't wash and I told the Parliament – the politician, it wasn't so much not being able to quickly wash and blow dry the sheets. I had enough towels and sheets to go on and on all night. It was their little fluffy that they you know, were comforted by in their bed that I needed to wash and quickly put in the dryer. That um I didn't have that luxury being able to comfort them with their little bed thing and that was really hard, because I was very annoyed that night that I couldn't do that. But he sat there and sort of sympathised and I said to Vaughan Johnson afterwards and they said – oh that was a really good story about the vomit. And I said well it was actually a true story, but I said to him then, you know, Jed's sitting here as aged 2 on my lap. Is he going to sit here at aged 22 with his wife and baby asking are we ever going to get

power, because Lex had been you know, part of this looking, hoping for power for the 20 years he's been here. So will Jed sit here in 20 years time with his baby, repeating what I'm saying now? So we will see.

22:21:08:10

TF What about the RAPS ? system? Like it's been put to me from some people that, that RAPS could be a, a solution –

MM Could be a solution.

TF For out here. And might make more sense than you know, a highly intensive quarter of a million dollars to bring –

MM The grid power.

TF Power to some properties. That sort of thing.

MM 22:21:27:05 I know that they're looking at saying we have to become more environmentally friendly and, and the government have to be seen as working towards that way and setting more people up on the grid system is actually not showing that they're becoming um aware of the problem with electricity. They're actually adding to the problem. And I can see that, and I can understand that, but they're offering a system that from, the people that seem to know and have researched a lot like the Women for Power people. I mean I'm trusting all of the research they have done for us and believing what they're saying that this isn't, it's not well enough developed for us to cope with. It is still going to mean that a second grade system and if we fought this long, I think we want you know, we want what everybody else gets and rather than a second rate system so – I don't have the knowledge myself. I'm just basing all my, my own opinion on what they're telling me so – and I know they are doing the work. They're doing the research.

TF And how about the um cotton farming? Have you been involved in that, speaking of environmental um issues?

MM Issues.

TF Yeah. Tell me how that's impacted on your life and your opinion on that.

MM **Channels Country/Environmental Politics**

22:22:32:20 Well it became a very big thing because of the organic beef group that we had just sort of formed a year or two before the cotton issue came up. Um and Lex and I are involved in the, in the OBI organic beef group um in the Channel Country because we are totally organic and can be

now a very particular part of Australia that um doesn't need tick, we don't have ticks and things like that. Um the group that got together and formed this, the work that was put in with trying to establish communications with Japan and the exporting of our beef to Japan at a premium um and really working towards um overcoming the drought and some of the other financial problems by looking at a bit of niche market that we seemed to have because of our area, and this was looking positive and something that we were all sort of quite, getting quite interested in, um because the wool industry of course wasn't coming back and we really needed to all work on something else. And all of a sudden the cotton issue came up and it was definitely going to be threatening what we were trying to do, but it was also threatening the fact that, you know, what's happened to the rivers where they've farmed cotton before and you know, we were all out here sort of thinking, well hang on. We really don't want that to happen to this beautiful area out here. So apart from being worried about that, we were also worried about our organic business which really would have been in big trouble if we'd started having that. Um and I think the fight sort of is still continuing. We've won a few battles along the way but I'm not sure whether it's gone and finished with. I think the, the consensus is that it's not shelved and put away forever but luckily the organic company's going very well and now looking at going into Europe and America so – 22:24:22:12

TF And how would somebody growing cotton and irrigating that, how would that threaten your organic beef and what exactly do you mean by organic beef?

MM **Channels Country/Environmental Politics/Pastoral Industry**

22:24:33:14 Well the organic beef is absolutely totally organic so no chemicals are to be used. The sheep can't run where the cattle run because sheep are dipped. Um the cattle aren't to be touched with any chemicals. If they have fly in their eye, they're not to be treated with any chemical at all. So it has to be absolutely totally organic. We um we have certification through NASAR that and they certify you after three years of doing soil testing randomly throughout the area of your place, and then those um the certification continues every year after that. But you can start promoting your product and selling your product after three years and then every year, they test again and again. And you have to put certain management techniques in

that they recommend and you've got to prove that you've done those and we keep pasteurisation um programmes and planning in books and photographs to show the pasture um so basically the whole system of the OBI organic group, right from eating the herb, the herbs and things that grow naturally in the flowers and whatever out here, right through to in-transit, they eat organic hay only. Ah right through to the meatworks that they've chosen to run, to run the whole property. I don't know all the sort of details, ins and out. I just, the bits and pieces that I've seen on video and what I've read. But basically it is totally organic. No chemical. 22:26:01:02

TF And so how do – (interruption)

So how, how would you know, one or two neighbours having, growing cotton on their farm, impact on what you're doing on your land?

MM **Channels Country/Cotton**

22:26:23:24 Well once again, the details I'm not sure of, but I think basically what I gather is that the chemicals they use in cotton would wash down through the soil, through the river system and could end up on any of the properties anywhere and as soon as we have chemical found in our soil, we're not organic any more. Um, not certified organic. So I think you know, in a nutshell, I think it was basically the chemicals washing down the stream and into the soil I think was the, the main issue. Lex was very involved with all of that so I left it to him. I tended to the children.

TF And tell me about race relations as you've experienced them out here.

MM **History/Race Relations**

22:27:04:16 I haven't really experienced anything um Jundah itself doesn't have any indigenous people and apparently the history is that they're – I mean I'm going on what I've been told. I'm not sure if this is true. The history was that there was a, an Aboriginal woman that was murdered um down at what they call the Jimmy Shoe Creek in Jundah. Um and it's sort of a bit of voodoo now for the Aboriginals to live in Jundah and now whether that's true or just a story, I'm not sure, but in the 20 years that um Lex's lived here, there haven't actually been a family that live here and we don't have any at the school so I'm not sure if there is a bit of sort of taboo with, among the people. Um, I mean they live in Windorah and further afield but no, we don't have any.

Even Stonehenge. They, they live up in Stonehenge so yeah. Might be a bit of truth to the story. I don't know.

TF There was a – I don't know a lot about that history of this area but I do know there was a big massacre I think in 1876 at Battle Hole. Um, is there much talk in the town of that, of that history of, of conflict over the early settlement?

MM 22:28:18:18 Only when sort of certain historical events come up that you start to sort of talk about it or if somebody new has come to town like the new Principal of the school, and you sort of get discussing why things are named, what they're named, because I know we've got Tragedy Paddock on this property and um um, there's another – some sort of a big of a scary name somewhere else and apparently there's stories that go with those. But is the Battle that one about the little boy that walked from Retreat? Is that that story?

TF I –

MM Have you heard about the little Aboriginal boy –

TF No.

MM **Race Relations**

22:28:52:18 Who lost his leg and walked from Retreat all the way in to Jundah or something. There is a story about a battle that went on and a little Aboriginal boy had his leg blown off and he crawled from Retreat, which is where – Retreat was named because that's where the troops retreated to in one of those battles – and um he apparently walked that far. Now that's sort of 70 kilometres and he dragged himself that far or something. So yes. I don't know about this other one though.

TF Do you feel um echoes of those um of that conflict in your life here now?

MM 22:29:30:06 No. No. I don't think there's really – I wouldn't say there'd been any race issues in the whole time I've lived here. You know, there's the Yugoslavians that do the opal mining. There's a lot of them sort of around, and um we've got some Islander people at the moment and you know, we don't have the Aboriginals but we have a lot to do with them, if we're – with the Windorah families when they come up to our Sports camps. I mean they come and we go down there. And no, I wouldn't say there's any, any um, any issues with them at all actually.

TF And how about – you've lived here in the period of Mabo and Wik.

MM Mmm.

TF Do you remember hearing about those decisions and what kind of reverberations might they have had in your life and in this community?

MM **Native Title**

22:30:14:10 At the time actually, just as the Mabo issue was handed down, as the signing and that sort of thing happened, we unfortunately had our property up for sale because it was um, it was at a time where we had both got to a point where we thought 'why are we here'? Prices were low. Drought was on. You know, we weren't getting power. It was like, you know, why are we here? Let's go. So we looked at moving and we put the place on the market. We had 2 little boys at that time I think and they were very much babies so they really weren't country boys living out in the you know, wide open spaces. They were basically with me in the house. So we had the place on, up for auction, but it was a very difficult time and you know, the agent sort of said to us, you know, people aren't looking until the final thing is handed down and John Howard actually came to Longreach only about two or three weeks before our auction date and was talking about what this Native Title thing was going to be. What it was going to mean to us. And there was sort of um pieces of paper sent to properties that were part of some big group that was going to be taken over, and of course there was the Jundah sitting right there in it. So the agents did say look, people aren't going to be looking at places that might be ending up going back to Native, you know the Native Title issues are there and you're property being one of them may scare a lot of people away. So whether that did or not I don't know but the place didn't sell and you know, luckily it didn't because as the boys got just even a year down the track, we were so glad that they're here and um now more so than ever when I see what they can do and I just love the fact they're being brought up out here. But –

TF Is this, is this leasehold or do you own it freehold?

MM 22:31:56:00 No. This is all leasehold. Um there are very few places that can be freehold out around here apparently.

TF So it would in fact be the Wik decision that would potentially affect you more?

MM Yes.

TF Has that, I mean is there much talk about that issue?

MM **Native Title**

22:32:11:22 There was a lot around that time so that was going back to '80, ah '90 – when was all that? Probably four years ago. Yeah. Very much so. And we were actually receiving booklets in the paper that sort of, in the mail, that was sort of saying things like your property is, is one of the ones that's coming under the such and such group that will take over your property and we're sort of like - what really happens to us if this happens? Lex was very worried about it and I know I remember saying to him, you know, don't worry about things until they actually happen. You can't worry about things until we know what's going on. And then it seemed to all fade away really. So we don't know. Don't hear much about it at all any more.

TF So are there any Native Title claims over this, over this land?

MM 22:32:54:16 From what they showed us on those maps, it was very hard to get details. It was sort of areas. And the actual Braidwood property was very hard for them to pinpoint yes or not. We, we never got a clear answer from anybody. Um but definitely this Jundah area, yes. There was. It was marked on that map so yeah, what part of Braidwood was counted I don't know, if any.

TF Do you feel there's been much effort put in by political parties or by, I don't know, the Native Title Tribunal to kind of, to educate people in this area on the issue or has it been more like sort of scare campaigns or –

MM **Native Title**

22:33:33:06 No, definitely scare campaigns. It was very hard to find out a lot of details. Um I don't feel that we understood anything really very well at all. We would write to our, we wrote to our Member, our Federal Member um in Roma and I remember receiving back um very much a, a sort of a standard letter that he'd obviously sent to everybody, but still didn't tell us what it's going to mean for us. If it happens. If it doesn't. So I guess we were at a frustrated stage of not really knowing anything but then as time went on, nothing was ever mentioned any more and it's not actually something we even think about now. So, no, it's sort of faded into the background.

TF This is a question going way back, but how would you describe the attitude to education in this area now?

MM 22:34:21:12 Very strong I think actually. I think the people here are most concerned about what their children will be able to do. I know a lot of families would like their children to be able to return to the land, return to this area and have a job to come to. Um, but no I think the, I think the education's fairly high on most people's lists. The um School of Distance Education families that work through the correspondence, you know, those mothers do an incredible job of making sure that those children are, are um are really are doing real school and that's a big ask for them when they're also out helping their husbands and doing it. I don't know how they do it. I don't know how they do it. But obviously education is really of a high priority so they make sure they do it.22:35:08:04

TF And having come to this area and in fact Lex having coming to this area, you know, as adults – well, you said Lex was Grade 11 – what do you see for the future? Like is this just a stage in your family's life or is this the beginning of you know, a multi-generation –

MM Generation. The –

TF Dynasty.

MM Yes. What was it? Dirtwater Dynasty.

## **SIDE B**

TF ... in fact Lex having come to this area, you know, as, as adults. Well I know you said Lex was Grade 11. What do you see for the future? Like is this just a stage in your family's life or is this the beginning of, you know, a multi-generation –

MM A generation. The –

TF Dynasty.

MM **Education/Children**

22:35:31:00 The – what was it? Dirtwater Dynasty. Ahhh. We've discussed it on or off wondering what will happen and we both decided that we don't want them to have to go to boarding school because we just couldn't bear not having them around us right through sort of their teenage years, as long as we possibly can. So we're looking at moving when Jack starts high school, which is now only five and a half years away, which is really scary

because I'm, I love watching them grow out here and even though I feel Jack at age 12 would have a fairly good solid basic land upbringing, he would have by then been out quite a lot helping Dad muster and um you know been out on that fence line and I think he'd, he really would have worked the place. Now Joe would be Grade 5 when we leave, so he would've done a fair bit too but Jed would only be Grade 4 and I sort of wish that Jed would also have been able to get to being 12 out here, not just you know, 8. So we're a little bit torn about that but we do want to move so that we can be with him for school.

22:36:04:06

JH The tape's just run out.

TF OK. We might just – we're nearly finished. I think we'll just finish on –

MM The audio.

JH I can put back in –

TF Oh yes.

JH ..... minutes –

TF Yeah. OK. Recording what um?

JH Tape 45.