

INTERVIEW WITH GLADYS CROSS
22 June 2000

Refers to tape 56_BVC_SP

Topics in Bold

TF = Trish GC = Gladys

SIDE A AND PART SIDE B

TF **DAT Tape No. 20. It's the 22nd of (pause) OK. So this is camera tape No. 56, DAT Tape No. 20. It's the 22nd of June, 2000, and we're interviewing Gladys Cross at her home in Windorah. Trish FitzSimons on sound. Julie Hornsey on camera. 56_BC_SP**

TF So Gladys, tell me where and when you were born and what your name was when you were born. You know, the name your parents gave you.

GC 08:01:54:00 Yeah. I was ah Gladys Ruby Cross, ah Gladys Ruby Geiger and I was born in Jundah.

TF And in what year was that and, and where were you born in Jundah, do you know?

GC 08:02:08:20 At the 10th, on the 10th of ah the 2nd '37 and at the Jundah Hospital, but it wasn't as big as what it is now.

TF So that's interesting because most people of your sort of age or even younger, have talked about going away to Longreach or Brisbane or, um, you know. Where did you come in the family? Was your Mum going to Jundah because she'd had lots of other kids already?

GC No. I'm the second oldest. And my brother, but I was the only one born in Jundah.

TF And do you know –

GC I don't know.

TF Why that was?

GC Not really. I suppose we were closer to Jundah at the time.

TF So where were your parents living at the time that you were born?

GC Ah, at Curalle. Curalle Station.

TF Oh, that's just north of Jundah isn't it?

GC No. It's ah down here near Arrabury.?

TF Near Cuddapan. Cuddapan.

GC Um, down that way, yeah.

TF And what were your parents doing down there at the time.

GC They were working on the, ah Koorallie station. My father was.

TF Do you know what his role was?

GC Ah just stockman there.

TF And how about your Mum? What was she up to? Was she full-time mothering or?

GC 08:03:28:00 Yeah. Full-time doing, just looking after cooking and that. Just most of the wives done all that.

TF Cooking just for your Dad and the family or cooking for the station?

GC 08:03:39:00 No. Cooking for the family. But those days they used to grow their own vegies and everything and milk goats and that to – otherwise you didn't have anything much.

TF And tell me a bit about your family in this area. Like when had the Geiger's come here and yeah. Just tell me a little bit about the background of, of your family.

GC Ohh, that's where you might have me, on dates and that.

TF Don't worry about dates. Just kind of give me a sense of you know, whether your parents were the first ones to come here or just a sense of -

GC **Pioneers: Geiger**

08:04:14:20 No. They weren't the first but they were here oh round about the time ah what the Tully's and that came here and then Geigers came and we, our grandfather was at Ingillah?, then they went down to Curalle and then back to the JC. He was in the pub there. He was in the Windorah Hotel here. And um the family grew up really at the JC. That's where my mother got married in, out at um Whitula Gate and then we lived around the area here.

TF So when you were a child then, you were on Curalle Station with your Dad and stockman?

GC Yeah.

TF How long were you there?

GC **Education/Childhood**

08:04:59:10 Oh, I wouldn't really know off-hand. Oh I was only about ah three I think when we left down there. And then we moved up to Mariju? on Carranya that we own now. And we lived there and moved up to, out on to Galway Downs as er out station to Galway. And then when we were old

enough to come to school, they asked my father about bringing us in to go to school here and they got us a house and my father went on to the bridge, when they were building the bridge. And then we lived here ever since.

TF So when you say 'they', who, who was kind of they who asked about you coming to town and school?

GC **Romance**

08:05:42:20 Well really it's um Ted Cross and them and that were in the shop and then I ended up marrying their son and they only had one child and that's –

TF So they were friends of your parents were they or?

GC 08:05:58:00 Not really. They were just in the shop and sorta people were around and they wanted to get the school going in Windorah and they thought it would be better for us to come in and go to school here and make up the numbers and that's how the school reopened then.

TF Ah, so the school, Windorah School –

GC It had closed up in those years.

TF What years would that have been, do you know?

GC Well, I –

TF Approximately.

GC Was about ah 7. Ah what's that 7 13.

TF So you were born in –

GC About '56, wouldn't it?

TF Hang on. Weren't you born in '37.

GC Yeah.

TF So if you were 7, we'd be talking about um '44. So had the school closed during the Second World War perhaps?

GC 08:06:46:00 Oh I think there was just no ah kids at all there and there wasn't a lot here then families seemed to grow more and more. Stations had a lot of families on them then.

TF So was it just you that came to school here?

GC 08:07:04:00 No my brother and I both came in. We stayed, boarded. I was at the police station for a while and then I – we went to the hotel until our mother and father moved in to town to live.

TF And so where did the Cross's come in? Were they the ones running the hotel?

GC 08:07:20:16 No. They – well they own the hotel and the shop. And they ah put the teacher up for the time because there wasn't anywhere near the houses in Windorah's what there is now. And um my cousins and them were living up here and there was only about, they were really the only families here.

TF So tell me about starting school then at Windorah School.

GC **Flood/Education**

08:07:46:10 Well we went to the hall to go to school and the teacher um oh well he's ah came out and stayed at the ah there and he said and when he first got here, you know, the mosquitoes and that were bad and we all had our little billies um with some manure in 'em, cow manure and went to school and had 'em there for the mosquitoes and that 'cause there was, the flood was up at the time. But ah no, I think it was good days. We all enjoyed ourselves.

TF So tell me about floods when you were a child. What would it mean when the river was up?

GC **Flood**

08:08:23:06 Well when the river was up there's, no-one could go anywhere but they'd bring the pigs and everything out of the channels which made quite a bit of excitement in the town 'cause everybody'd be out chasing 'em and that, the few that were in the town. And then the boating the food across from right over near Hammond Downs 'cause there was no ah no other way of getting it in those days.

TF And then –

GC

TF Oh go on.

GC 08:08:53:14 Yeah they'd go right up the river there and then back around. They'd have to row boat and a little, and the motor on it and the bri – water had to be a certain heights to get over the bridge or under it you know. It was pretty hard really.

TF And did that ever mean you missed out on, on food? You know, like – or was, like were floods a tragedy in any sense or were they sort of just like –

GC 08:09:16:00 No, not really 'cause everybody had their own oh well we had goats and if everybody run out of meat, well they killed the goats and supplied the town with them and everybody had ah chooks so they had their own eggs and everybody had flour and they made their own bread those days.

- TF And vegies?
- GC 08:09:38;02 Well everybody had a garden, you know. They had that for years. It's only lately, later years that everybody decided to go the easy way like everybody else I suppose but some'd still have their gardens.
- TF I'm just going to pause a minute and just adjust your –
- GC But they used to have their smoke fires all around the hotel and everybody had 'em in their yards and houses and everything because it was the only way you didn't buy mosquito coils and that.
- TF So are the mosquitoes bad now when it floods?
- GC 08:10:27:00 Really bad. This year we had 'em shocking. They were for a long time too. Had the mosquitoes and the sandflies and, but they were all over. Everywhere they were. All out west and everywhere.
- TF And is Ross River fever a problem here?
- GC 08:10:42:00 We don't seem to get it here but ah it's been, oh there's been a bit of sickness around Longreach with it. But ah we don't seem to oh I dunno of anyone that's had it from around Windorah.
- TF So – OK. (break in taping)