

INTERVIEW WITH GLADYS CROSS

22 June 2000

TF = Trish GC = Gladys

**SIDE A AND PART SIDE B**

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

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 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 At the 10<sup>th</sup>, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of ah the 2<sup>nd</sup> '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 Koorallie. ? Koorallie Station.

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

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

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 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 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 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 **Crully?** 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 Widgelow? and then we lived around the area here.

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

GC Yeah.

TF How long were you there?

GC 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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 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)

TF Some scared teachers over the years.

GC Yeah. Well as he said he when he come on the boat and then he got here and nothing to work with and they told him would he open it up and he said he was really – but it was a good letter. I've got it there somewhere.

TF So how many kids do you think started school with you in '44?

GC Oh there'd have been only about 7 or 8 I think. Just enough to open the school. We had to have 7 to open the school.

TF And – do you – did the Second World War make any impact on your young life? Like, are your – what do you think are your earliest memories and did they have anything to do with the war?

GC Well when we first moved into town here ah my mother used to give her clothes coupons for food or they'd swap 'em around with the other ladies that didn't need 'em and we swapped around like that but ah that's the most I can remember about it.

TF So did your Mum move into town with you kids –

GC Yeah.

TF Leaving your Father out on the station?

GC No. He got a job – they, really the Cross's got him a job on the bridge when they were building the bridge at ah here. And ah Dad and Mum both moved in and then we lived in town.

TF And so do you remember the day the bridge opened?

GC Yeah. Yeah, and we just had a big celebration for the bridge opening.

TF So what happened that day that the bridge opened?

GC Oh it wouldn't have been a lot in those days. I think the celebration they had for it was the biggest one. Everything sort of happened those days without any big ah do about it.

TF And so when you moved into Windorah, who was living here? Paint a picture for me of, of what that community you moved into was like.

GC There was only oh there was a hotel and um there was um oh only be a man and his wife and what there was Wilson and them were in the pub and his son. There was ah Cross's at the shop. Mr and Mrs Cross and Reg. Well he was away at boarding school. There was the McCulloughs down at one house down there and ah oh, the post office and the police station and there was a big tall house here and the hall and um oh there was, we moved up here. There was us and the Costellos was next to us and we had the Catholic Church and that's about it.

TF And was the Catholic Church important in this town?

GC Yes it was.

TF So tell me, tell me how. Like tell me how, how the Catholic Church functioned in the community.

GC Well most of the people that were here were Catholics and like ah Sunday was a big day when the Priest came and that. It was always a big going thing. And a lot, you know a lot going to it from, come in from off the properties and that.

TF And do you think, I know in Australia at the time when you were young, in lots of parts of Australia Catholic and Protestant were a bit like this, you know. Not wanting their children to marry each other and not thinking much of each other. Do you remember that kind of –

GC Yes I do because I married ah um a Church of England and I was a Catholic and there was a bit of that going, you know, quite a bit really. But I think if you love someone, well you go the way you – and now it's all not the – gone out hasn't it?



TF So we might come back to that actually when we talk about marriage.

GC Mmm.

TF Um but that's interesting. So how long did you spend at school then Gladys?

GC I was ah Grade 5 when I finished school. I didn't go away to boarding school or anything.

TF And do you remember discussions in the family about that?

GC Going –

TF Or was it just assumed that Grade 5 was enough?

GF Oh I think my parents weren't in the position to send us and there was a Priest here that wanted me to go and that but Mum, I don't think, you know, she had goats and all and thought we all should stay home and work and help around the place.

TF So when do you, what age do you think you were when you started to work and what were the first jobs you remember doing?

GC Oh I was 15 when I started but I was working ah part-time at the hotel through younger than that. Helping out when things were busy and I really left school at ah 15 and I was working.

TF So hang on, if you'd started school at 7, then Grade 5 you would have been 11 or 12?

GC Yeah, but we only started when we came in here. I was only 15. I went to Grade 5.

TF Right. Right. So maybe you were a bit older when you'd come to here?

GC Yeah.

TF Yeah. Yeah. And, and so what was it like to start work in the pub? Can you remember what that was like.

GC Oh I enjoyed it 'cos there was a lot working around here and there was a lot of young, you know, the town with the drovers going through, there was always a lot at the hotel. And ah when the drovers went through, that's when the town really sort of had people around. There was always 15 around the hotel most of the time and there was always three girls working there but when it was busy, well I'd help out.

TF And who was the proprietor of the hotel at that time?

GC It was May McGrath when I was working there. And they were only local girls from Jundah and there that came down. Mary Murphy and ah, well she was Mary ah, oh I can't think of her maiden name. But they were there and they were always good, you know, to us 'cause we were boarding there for a little while before our parents moved in.

TF And would women come into the bar when you were first working there?

GC Not a lot. No. It wasn't the thing. And as I said, you never heard swearing. If the men swore, they would always apologise. But now I think the women swear more than the men at times.

TF So wasn't that curious that adult woman, women wouldn't be allowed into the pub but you as a young girl were working there? How did –

GC I was working in the dining room. I never worked in the bar. Only ah Frank McGrath and May would help and ah they didn't have many behind the bar apart from themselves running it.

TF And so who would eat in the dining room?

GC Well ah all the ones um like Doctor's day, those days, it was like a day's race is today. Everybody would come in because the Doctor didn't go to all the properties so they'd all come to town for the day

and that was a very big day at the hotel and they'd all have lunch and that there and, in the dining room and that, and our races. Well, they were a lot bigger than what they are now. 'Cause we used to set up ah what er 40 at a sitting and up to 10 sittings and it was always tablecloths and napkins and yeah, you name it you know. Plenty of washing to do. White tablecloths and all that which now it's completely the opposite.

TF And people dressed up for the races?

GC Very much, yeah. And you had to have a new dress every day for the dance. It was three night's dancing and then they'd dance 'til 5 o'clock in the morning and then we'd go to work. But when Sunday came, we were looking forward to Sunday 'cause we were pretty exhausted, but loved it, you know. And they'd get the band and that to come.

TF So where would the bands come from?

GC Oh, Longreach. And there.

TF So that would have taken them what? A couple of days for the band to get here?

GC Ahh, no I think they'd come down in a day. The dirt roads, there were dirt roads long as they were, you'd get down from Longreach in a day. But see our mail truck and that from Quilpie, that used to take a couple of days to get out here and then go back and that and now, it's ah we get two mails a week and two planes a week.

TF And were there many Aboriginal people in the town when you were here as a kid?

GC Not many. Er when we first came here there was very few really. I don't think there was any. And then the Gorringer family moved in

and they lived here and they had ah what, there was – Mrs Gorringer had about 14 in her family. And then the town sort of grew and grew and more people came and started to ah build a bit, but the families were fairly large. Like there was 7 in my family and on the stations there was 7. And when we had a Christmas tree here at the end of the year, well there used to be about 300 kids or more at the Christmas tree ‘cause every family at Galway Downs out here which now just has one family on it, there was ah about six families out there because there were out stations and they had sheep.

TF So what’s caused the stations – lots of people have talked to us about the station – how the stations have come to have fewer and fewer families. What’s driven that do you reckon?

GC Oh, I think wages and that and ah they’ve gone out of sheep and cut back on labour you know as um when you look at it now, if you had the labour that you had those days, well you would never make any money yourself paying it all out wages. But they all had their families out on the properties and taught ‘em and that.

TF And were there Aboriginal families out on the properties?

GC Yeah. Yeah, when we were out at Galway there was sort of some Aboriginals and some white families.

TF Were the Aboriginal people out on Galway single men or were they there with their families?

GC No, they had their families.

TF So when do you think that started to shift? You know, when, when did there start to be many fewer families out on the stations?

GC Well I think when we moved to town, maybe they all had the same as us, you know. As kids got bigger, older, they had to move in for

education and that. And ah some moved away and then that was it. They sort of started to close the out stations down. Which was a shame. But you can see their point, you know. Motors at every um out station. It costs a lot of money doesn't it?

TF Like a generator?

GC Yeah. Well they had to have power and that but in our time even when we lived here in Windorah, we didn't have the power so we had I'll never forget 'em, those ah carbide lights. Yeah. Carbide lights and just kerosene lights for a long time.

TF So there was no power, no generators at all here?

GC No. It was when my ah Narelle was born really is when they opened the power here in Windorah.

TF So what year would that have been?

GC Well she's ah, that would've been '72.

TF So how did you have a dance? You know, like if you have the races and you have three dances without electricity.

GC Well they had their own little motors. The hotel had its own and the hall had its own and like private homes, well they couldn't afford 'em so they just had the kerosene lanterns and the carbide lights.

TF So electric lights all night would be pretty exciting?

GC Yeah. Yeah. No, that's all everyone had.

TF And so Gladys, tell me then about – well it sounds like you'd met your, known your husband for forever, but tell, tell me about how you and he came to get together.

GC Well, we were, in the end I was working at the hotel and he would come but as I said, I – and his, he was related to the woman at the hotel and they always said you know, oh you want to swing on to him.

And I said oh no, I'm not interested. And I don't know how we really got together. And then I, well I was always making all these dates for other girls and I ended up with him myself 'cause there was always some around. But um and that's how we ended up together.

TF So he'd been like a mate of yours at school that you'd be fixing up with your friends or something like that?

GC Well he was ah 9 years older than me. Reg was away at boarding school when I was there, but the girls that worked at the hotel, they were always there and you know, sort of keen on Reg and if we wanted to go anywhere, I'd have to ask him to take us and things like that and um that's how we'd go.

TF So how old were you and he when you got married?

GC I was 36. No I was 26, I'm sorry, not 36. I was 26.

TF So that would be, I mean that sounds quite old, quite young by today's standards but quite old by the standards of, of your time. Did, had most of your friends –

GC Yeah, but I was going with Reg for 9 years before I married him. I think it was just you know, company or enjoying ourselves too much to settle down or what. No, I think it was in the middle of a drought and he had money problems and worried and that and so we just, 'cause he used to live in town here or out on the property 'cause its only 35 miles out.

TF So what was his um what was his job then, in the time when you started going together with him and then when you married him?

GC Well he was an only child and they owned Carranya and ah they lived ah out there. Geigers owned it before. Cross as such gone back into the family again so it's both now. Geigers and Cross's.

TF So was there a way that the Geiger family had been through hard times? Like how was it that the Geiger – because to own a station would've taken presumably a lot of money. How was it the Geigers had gone from owning the station then to um you know, your, your Dad working as a stockman?

GC I don't know. Dad was the youngest one of his family. But I think his Father might've um you know been the one that enjoyed life a bit and, 'cause Granny Geiger was the one who stayed at home. They lost their one child there at the JC. And um I think that's how it went, you know. Grandad Geiger was the one - they all just got out and got themselves a job and went their own way.

TF So for you to go back to Carranya then with your husband, was it important to you that you were like going back to the land that your family had owned before?

GC Not really. I think I, I did enjoy going back to the land. They were all worried 'cause you know I loved life and that and entertaining like going up and playing tennis. I was always the one that, and when I was leaving they said oh, you'll be too lonely out there. But I really loved it. And I still do, you know?

TF What did you love about life out there at Carranya.

GC Well I liked the work and I liked um the space I think. I really do like the space but then I liked it in here too, you know?

TF So what was the work? What was your work out at Carranya.

GC Oh I worked beside um my husband. Done everything. Whether we were fencing, pulling bores or mustering or branding and everything and then I'd go home and get my kids. But I had it well organised 'cause if I couldn't, well I, it wasn't use of me going out. I'd always

have it planned that I was cooked ahead and there, and those days, you know, you had big smokos and three meals a day on the table. It was you know, it doesn't happen as the same today.

TF So how did you do that Gladys? How did you cook –

GC Well nobody knew how I'd done it but I did do it. But I think it was going from a pub life out there because you had your three meals a day at a hotel and they had to be on time and I never ever worked by a clock either but my stomach always told me when it was time and that's what they couldn't believe. But you know, they always loved to come to Carranya when they were building the roads. They all come up there for smokos but it was no effort to me. Even rearing my kids. I loved it you know, they said oh it's hard work and that but I didn't. I enjoyed every bit of it.

TF So tell me what a day would've been like. Just a, I mean I know it would have varied according – let's say a mustering day. When you, when you had your four kids and it was mustering day. What, tell me how your day would have gone? What time –

GC Well right. You'd get up about half past five in the morning and I'd get breakfast. In those days it was ride out on horseback or they'd, or they'd take the horses the day before to where they were going and then it was mustering and that. And I'd take 'em out ah smoko and lunch. I'd get up when they went to work. I'd do my baking and then I'd take 'em out smoko and lunch and then, and the kids loved it. And ah then I'd come home and get tea ready and bath the kids and that, and then we'd – same thing'd happen the next day.

TF So –

GC And it didn't worry me, the time I got up and that.



TF So in that example you just gave, you were going out to the men's camps but not actually kind of mustering, but on days when you were joining in with mustering or branding or whatever, what would happen to your children?

GC Well my kids would ah sit in the car or there but we always seemed to get 'em up the rails when we were branding or that. We seemed to be able to, you know, if one calf got out or that, or looked like getting out, we'd tell the kids to get up and they were just trained to get up the rails and get out of the road and they loved it. Or the littler ones would stay in the car and just hang out and watch everything that was going on.

TF So that was pretty much what happened today, wasn't it? You know like –

GC Yeah, everybody was involved and Kevin and them've worked for me for years. Their kids were born – reared really at Carranya with my kids. They got two girls and a boy. And whatever we done, the kids were involved in. And when they went to boarding school, we used to leave our mustering most of the time 'til they come home 'cause they just loved it. And while ah my husband was going up to Longreach and getting them 'cause I moved in here for 'em to go to school, but then we'd pack up and go back to Carranya for the holidays and ah Reg'd go and pick the kids up in Longreach when they were at boarding school and we'd pack up and then when he came home, we just went back out to Carranya and lived for the holidays. And they loved it.

TF And so what help did you have on the station? So we're talking now the fif - 1950s aren't we? 50s and 60s.

GC Yeah. No, there was only Reg, Kevin and myself that done all the mustering, branding and that. We just worked side by side all the time.

TF And so how old's Maudie? She – approximately?

GC Ah I dunno what she is. I mean Kevin's about five years younger than me.

TF So Maudie wouldn't be in her 50s, would she?

GC No.

TF No. She's much younger.

GC Yeah.

TF Mmm. And would a marriage between a white person and an Aboriginal person, like Maudie and Kevin, would that have been in any way unusual or that was just how things went .....

GC No. Kevin has got a bit of colour in him but ah, no, they're very good mates. Yeah. Very good mates. And as I said, you know, Kevin's worked for us for years and he worked for my husband before – no he worked for my, ah Reg's Uncle before we got married and then he come to work for us but Reg – Kevin was always treated like one of the family the whole time. And Maudie and that, they lived out there in the men's quarters out at Carranya and their kids grew up there until they all had to move in to school.

TF And so your kids and their kids work together?

GC Yeah. Yeah. They are always very close really. They miss it a lot, the younger ones, because you know, living out there and that but everybody's gotta go to work haven't they? There's not enough work out at Carranya for everybody.

TF So were there any jobs that you didn't do? You know, any jobs that, that you said that's men's work and you didn't participate in?

GC No 'cause if my husband went to a um, to attend a muster. Those days you had to go. It was all horseback. Well if he went to that, well I had to do the motor and, and ah I lived there by myself with the kids. Sometimes someone would come out and stay with me but it didn't worry me. They, I think everybody else worried for me. But I, with the motor going, I didn't like that, worrying about someone coming. But once I turned the motor off I was quite happy.

TF Because of what, you would fear that –

GC Someone might come you know. But ah apart from that I really enjoyed it.

TF So how long might your husband be away mustering?

GC Oh it could be a week or a fortnight. Depended on whose muster he went to you know? Some of the properties. 'Cause it was all horseback those days and you just didn't move as fast.

TF And so different properties would work together to muster, would they?

GC Well ah we'd go and attend their muster and they'd come over, someone from their properties would come and attend to ours. But now you just muster and you return the cattle to each other.

TF So why has that changed do you think?

GC Oh well, I think there's a lot more trust in people and they just um, it's easier for them to get their cattle back that way and to send a man over and you don't do it all sort of at once. Once when you started you kept going.

TF So you're saying that all the properties mustering together was to do with not being sure whether your neighbours might have a few of yours and you wanted to check it out?

GC Yeah, well they all, I think mainly is that ah they all felt they should go and help 'cause the fences were pretty bad those days and it was only fair they sent someone over to help you muster. As I've said, there was only Reg and I and Kevin and if they sent a man over to attend, well you got extra help. And if um the same with them. They got an extra help off you. 'Cause um you know, the men were, well you got a man and you got your cattle back and there was no trucking 'em home 'cause you had to walk 'em back when they got 'em so you really had to be there to bring your cattle home.

TF And –

JH Change tapes.

TF OK. And so Gladys, oh hang on, let's do an ID. You rolling?

JH Yep.

**TF So this is Tape 58 um which is the second tape of an interview with Gladys Cross. It's still DAT tape –**

JH 57.

TF Oh I beg your pardon. Tape 57. **The time code on the DAT is currently 3506 and that's DAT tape 20 and it's the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June, 2000.** Scary that it's 2000.

Um so if you participated in all your husband's jobs or you probably didn't even see it like that. If you did all the outside jobs, how about inside jobs? Would your husband get involved in baking and bathing and cleaning at home?

GC No. Reg wasn't interested in that sort of thing but he done the bookwork and all that and the motors and all the machinery and I done the house and cooking and that myself.

TF So quite a few women of your generation I suspect made children and house their whole life. Do you think that's right? Were you unusual in your degree of involvement in the land?

GC Oh I don't think so. I think a lot of women were the same. At Mt Leonard and all out west, the older women round my age, they were all – done all the cooking and gardening and the husband's with the books, done the books, and looked after that part of it. And the motors and that 'cause there was, you know, they done the servicing of their cars themselves and –

TF But I guess what I'm talking about, going out and getting involved in the stock work. Was that unusual for a woman of your generation?

GC Ohhh, I don't think a lot of 'em done a lot that I done. You know, some did, but some of the other women, they didn't get in the cattle yards, some of the men didn't like 'em doing it. But I enjoyed it and I loved it really.

TF Tell me about um, about other women that you knew that um that did get involved in the stock work. I guess I'm thinking of Maude Schaffer and Miss Duncan but I'd like you to, to use their names telling me about them. Does that make sense?

GC Yeah. Yeah well I, I know Miss Duncan used to go out but I, and ride horses and that. I don't know too much what she done. But ah Maude Schaffer, I know that she used to ah definitely you know, ride the horses and help with the stock and that and cook in the camp and everything 'cause they had, you know, a fairly big property. And

she'd do the cooking and she could make beautiful bread in a camp oven and ah yeah, and I think that was about the main because some of the men didn't like their women out in the paddocks.

TF How about Maude Schaffer's husband? How did he feel about what she did, do you know?

GC No. He done the bookwork and stayed at home. He was quite happy for her to go out. He never went out hardly. He wasn't the one to go out.

TF So did he look after the children and cook and clean do you think?

GC He had one girl. They only had one daughter, and ah but he was organised around the house. Maude Schaffer wasn't ah for that sort of thing. She was all outdoors. But I sorta enjoyed both, you know? I liked my home as much as I liked outside.

TF And did the community around here find what Maude did unusual? Or, or they just accepted that women found their own way and men did too? You know, did people talk about –

GC Yeah, she was moreso the main woman that was out you know, those days and doing it all. I think they did find it strange but she held her own with 'em all, you know, when they talked about things that happened and that, she was – I'd say she'd been the woman that done the most before my time.

TF And tell me the story about the Schaffers and the JC Hotel.

GC When they bought it? Yeah, well the men – it was right close to the Waveni ? station so when they ended up buying it, they took the roof off it and let the – just rain and that wash the walls away. Which was a shame. It was a nice hotel and going there for the drovers and that coming through 'cause the, you know, it was sort of in between. Give

'em a chance to have a few drinks and that on the way past and another stop you know, because there's a lot of long distance between Windorah and the JC when there was only horses and that.

TF And do you think that was Maude or her husband's decision?

GC Ahhh, I'd say more um oh probably both. Could've been hers 'cause she liked the men not drinking and she was the organiser outside. She had full control of the outside 'cause they had a pretty big ah store there and that but that's what Mr Schaffer liked all there, close around to the house and that ..... and that. And the bookkeeping and things like that, he was spot on there. He done the Flying Doctor. He was the secretary for the Flying Doctor for years, and that but ah indoors was not Mrs Schaffer's thing. She loved birds. She had birdcages and plenty of things around the house, like animals and that. Just loved 'em but ah she was the outdoor person all the time. She'd never stop driving around. Had a lot of goats and everything.

TF And how was it that you ended up basically running the outside um Gladys? I suppose I'm interested in, in what happened with your husband.

GC Oh Reg and I ah we worked together outside and that all the time and I'd come home and do the other but ah he ah what when he passed away, yeah Reg died of emphysema and of course he got um well none of us realised how bad he was, you know, and he was more – and um he knew I liked the outside so he let me do it. And ah then I just went on doing it after he went. The last words he said to me, he said 'I think it's going to be too much for you' but ah he knew I could, you know, handle the outside.

TF So would, did he have several years of being quite ill?

GC Yes, he did, but he never begrudged me going out because he knew I loved going out driving and he always used to say 'I'll be right. You go'. And I'd go out and drive around and that and come back and report to him because I think he knew you know, I'd tell him everything that went on and that.

TF So how many years do you think Reg spent as an invalid?

GC Well I think he spent longer than what we realised, you know, because well I used to just carry everything and that and I'd noticed, you know, if we were packing up going anywhere and that, it was the reason because Reg couldn't carry the things, you know? He'd be winded. But none of us really realised until he got really sick. He never let on anything and he never complained even when he was really sick.

TF So how old was your husband when he died then?

GC He was 60 ah 2.

TF So that was about a decade ago?

GC Mmm.

TF Yeah.

GC It was 9 years really on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

TF So how many years before that do you think you would've been running the place?

GC Oh, well I suppose I was so much with him that I felt I was part of it from the time we got married but ah he was still trying to do the book work up 'til the last which I hadn't done much of it and then my daughter sort of helped me, but I knew what was going on, you know? But that was just Reg's thing and mine was the house. But I'd always go out and organise, but he'd always come out. It was only the last ah



what about 3 years that he couldn't get around. Otherwise he'd always go out.

TF And tell me, what, what did you do to your children for their schooling?

GC Well we moved into town, I did, and ah sent them to the school in Windorah and then we, they went to Longreach to boarding school. To the convent. And then the two girls went on to Yeppoon and ah the boys went to the college.

TF What college is that?

GC Pastoral College. David went to the Longreach one and Graham went to one in ah oh where um old Joh Petersen was.

TF Um a Lutheran College I guess.

GC No. It was pastoral college.

TF Right.

GC Yeah, where they learnt about the station and stock and that. Pastoral College in Longreach. Yeah.

TF And so from when your first child was 5, you were living in town but travelling out every day to work?

GC No. We brought in here and she stayed with her grandmother for a while. Reg's mother. But we found out that I had to move in on account of you know, they can put it over grandmas you know, as I realise now. And um so I moved in and um stayed in here and sent 'em to school and then we'd go out for the weekends or – and then my husband used to come in. We'd live in here and move out there, 'cause we had no electricity and that so he said 'Well we've got everything in here when they put the electricity on'. And then he used to drive out every day.

TF So its, how long would it take you to get up to Carranya when you –

GC It's only about 20 minutes.

TF So that must've been pretty lucky in a way, to have a station that was close to the town?

GC Yeah. 'Cause we had it, we worked it out that it was cheaper just to live in here and drive out 'cause we had no electricity and um oh motors, you know? We only had the motors. Had a wind charger and when they sort of give up, Reg said 'Oh well, it'll be just as cheap to live in here as to replace 'em'. We had a 10 year drought and that knocked things around pretty badly.

TF So what years were drought years that you recall? Bad drought years.

GC Yeah, it was – well that's the reason why we didn't get married before then and when we thought it finished, Reg decided we might get married and now we did, and it went on for another three years but that was my worst thing, going from where, at a hotel where everybody's bright and happy and going out and seeing your cattle dying and Reg'd hit the calves on the head to save the cows and I hated it. I had a lot of poddy calves and that but that nearly broke my heart. I didn't think I'd cope with it. But ah after a while you know it's the right thing to do and way to go.

TF So the kind of thing we watched you doing today Gladys, you know?

GC Mmm.

TF Like hacking up bits of meat. I'd find it very tough to do that, having grown up in the city. When do you think you learnt to, I don't know, just take for granted that sort of –

GC We were doing that ah when the drovers would come through and we'd go out to the droving camps when we were kids. But ah no,

Reg'd, Reg said he'd back him and I against anyone killing a beast. That's how quick we were. I'm slow now. But we kill our own meat, see?

TF So how would you and Reg kill a beast?

GC Oh well just like we done there today. There'd be no, there's no hanging it up. You'd just shoot it and then skin it one side and get your meat off and then you'd roll it over and skin the other side and get your meat.

TF So it's sort of something you'd grown up with? Like your –

GC Yeah.

TF Grandkids are now growing up with it?

GC Yeah. Yeah and the kids used to go and then you know, you'd grill the rib bones and I'd kill and they love it. We used to when we were kids. We used to go out to the drovers 'cause there wasn't a lot of meat around our days and they'd always have a barbeque for us as they were coming through. When they were killing and that and have a barbeque for you to enjoy it.

TF So meat was one of the main foods –

GC Yeah. And see we only had kerosene fridges and you put your meat in the kerosene fridges and you'd corn your other meat which was really ah you know, you just dry corn it and then you'd hang it up in a bag and then that's how it had to keep until you finished eating it. Like sometimes you'd have these grubs in them and oh, it was unreal. And we'd soak it in the water you know, to get 'em out, and when you tell people about it now, look I couldn't eat it myself now. But you just lived with it and you didn't know, you know, it didn't worry you. And it wasn't unhealthy but now I think it would be if I had to eat it. And

your fresh meat, every time you got it out of a kerosene fridge, well you had to boundary-ride it which meant you had to cut all the outside off it because it was furry. Fur grew on it in the fridges.

TF So the fridges couldn't really cope?

GC No, the, the heat we had, you'd have to put wet towels over the top of your kerosene fridges to keep 'em, help keep 'em cool because they'd just defrost with the heat we had.

TF And did you often know houses to burn down from kerosene fridges? Like was fire a big fear?

GC No it wasn't 'cause I had a kerosene fridge out there and we'd go away and that kerosene fridge I, I've still got there 'cause I like it and everyone condemns it and that. But ah as long as they're put under properly, I find it very hard to believe that they will burn down from them.

TF But have you known, because I –.

GC I've heard of 'em but I, I really – that kerosene fridge there was in that house and it never stopped. When we went away or anything. We always had someone there and I went away um since my husband's passed away and I left someone in charge and they said 'Well tell me how you look after it' and I told 'em and ah they done just what I told 'em and there's – you know, the fridges, I just find it hard. But if they're not put under properly, they can catch fire.

TF So there's quite a lot of talk at the moment about you know, women for power and the need for electricity for these rural properties.

GC Yeah.

TF What do you think about that?

GC Oh I think it'd be good to have the power but I've bought a little motor for out at Carranya and batteries and I find that really good 'cause you know, we had to crank the old motors in my time but I've only put it on now for the last what three or four years and ah it's computer and starts up and stops and starts up again in the afternoon and charges the batteries up again.

TF I think I heard your daughter Narelle today say she'd rather have her own power than depend upon somebody else to provide it. Did that, would that be right? And, and do you agree with that?

GC Well I don't mind that because you know, you're not up against blackouts and things like that. Where, it's alright if we were further in where you've got more chance of getting ah something done, you know? But it's a little bit hard really out here. But where, in town here, Windorah, we only have our own power plant. The town does, and you have very little blackouts.

TF So you, these days Gladys, you have a lot of grandchildren around you here?

GC Yeah. I've got 9 grandchildren. This is my youngest daughter's little girl that didn't go out with us today. They're staying with their grandmother tonight, aren't youse?

TF And your children live around the town.

GC Yeah.

TF How, how many of your kids live around here?

GC Well ah Marilyn's in the hotel and she's got four. Um David's got two little girls and Narelle's got three. She's had two boys and a little girl.

TF And so, going back to um when your, when your husband was still alive but was getting sick, did you depend upon the labour of your children a lot?

GC No, I didn't have 'em here because Narelle was at boarding school and um I looked after Reg myself. He thought, you know, when he went to Charleville he knew, but he got up every day and he tried to get around as much as he could. He didn't - but when he really got sick when we went to Charleville, he said, you know, it'd be too much but I said to him well I've looked after him all these years. I should be able to do it in the last and so he came back home and he was good. I just looked after himself and done things.

TF So he died here in, in the house?

GC Yeah.

TF So how would you cope in that period when he would've needed your nursing and you needed to be out, out um you know, working on the place. How did you handle that?

GC Well he was always up and around. He, he was one that didn't want to be waited on too much but ah at the finish I had to take his meals in or sponge him and things like that but apart from that, he was ah pretty good. But ah as long as I got his meals and that and he ah, I'd go out 'cause he always wanted me to go, but he tried hard to get around with me you know? He'd go out and that but he'd get tired. But he never really give up until - it was only very short time.

TF And so then after Reg died, what kind of process did you go through deciding what to do with the place?

GC Well when he went um we owed a fair bit of money so it was really a big strain but I felt if I left here, it'd be the finish of me because I

loved it and I still wanted to stay here. So I just fought on and got where I am today. But I went out and just drove around like we always did and enjoyed it you know, and thought of the things we done together and that and that's the way ah it went.

TF So who works on the property? Who - how big is Carranya and who, who physically works on the property today?

GC It's a quarter of a million acres and well Spinny's out there but when we muster, well I go out and I muster in the car and I just put on ah contractors you know, a couple to help us. Whoever's around handy enough to do. But I get the helicopter in now to muster and we got bikes. We, you know, it's a much quicker process. This in and out and over with.

TF And is it you that does the planning for you know, when things are going to happen and –

GC Yeah.

TF The managing?

GC Yeah. Yeah my sons were there and then they ..... over here and then Kevin was there when Reg passed away and they thought they better move on rather than see Kevin go and then Kevin moved on. The boys come home and they've swapped around a bit and that but they've all – David likes flying the chopper so – but they all come there and help me when I need 'em.

TF So today it was Narelle with her kids. Would that be unusual or you, you often work with your daughter?

GC Oh well they all help me 'cause Marilyn helps me with the books and ah the boys all help with the, well flying the helicopter. My other son flies a little ultra-light and Narelle, if she's got time, she'll come out

and that. And ah Maudie and Spinney are there so everybody gives a hand if we're short of staff. But I don't do as much as I do now. I'm more of a supervisor.

TF And so where do you see the future? What do you see in the future for Carranya Gladys?

GC Oh one of the boys'll end up there. Probably, ah you know it's not big enough for the two of 'em. But ah go from there.

TF So Narelle isn't interested in the property?

GC Well I think the boys'll be there. With a bit of luck you know I might be able to get something else for her, you know? Or um something ah before um you know where she'll be able to buy. Shhh!

TF So it's interesting that, you know, it's in your generation it's been you that has worked on the property enormously and, I don't know, I mean I only was there today but it would seem that your daughter's pretty involved in the place as well. Why is it do you think that, that the boys will inherit the, the property?

GC Well they've all worked hard there. Like we've, the boys have all built our cattle yards and everything. Everything's been built by the family really. Like the – all of 'em have been, well they've been with me so I get 'em to do everything that I do, you know? And they've all helped in all that way. Like they all ride horses. Marilyn rode a horse but she wasn't a real horse girl. But the boys were very good horsemen and very good with machinery and things like that but I think they all sort of like different things to do.

TF But is there a way then that, that you think it's, it's the best way for the men of a family to inherit the land?



GC I think that's what their father would like, would've like, you know? And, but it's up to them. Like if they sooner do something else, I wouldn't make anyone go back to a property if they don't like it. Like my husband. He wasn't very keen about the property but I, he knew I really loved it you know and ah he'd rather been an engineer or something else, let alone he owned it.

TF And is it, I mean I have no idea about your family Gladys, but is it possible that it's your daughters that really love it more than your sons? You know, that the same thing is happening in this generation?

GC Oh I think Marilyn and them are happy where they are now. They've just bought the pub wanting just the life 'cause they were on a property and managed and things like that but I think ah they like the – well Ian does. He likes the life he's got. And ah Narelle likes the property but ah I'd say they're all as involved as one another. Well 'relle's out on Carrariva ? and I think given the opportunity, she'd enjoy it as much as the boys.

TF But their father, you think their father would have wanted –

GC Mmm ah yeah well I think the boys are more with everything you know? Like I think you've gotta have someone that knows machinery and things like that and there's a lot involved on a property isn't there? With machinery and fencing and things like that, not that Narelle's not frightened of fencing. None of 'em are. They've all done – had to do their bit whether girls or boys.

TF So who does the machinery stuff on the property at the moment?

GC Well Kevin, ah fellow I've got working out there, and if I've got any of the cars I might take 'em to Longreach and have 'em serviced up there but my husband was very good. He done all his own.

- TF I'm probably asking you a lot of questions about inheritance 'cause I'm interested in how it functions. I mean I know Mooraberrie sold recently for three million dollars. Carranya – would you have any idea how much it would be worth?
- GC A million – oh I'm not, around about a million. It's not ah – Mooraberrie is a bigger place. UH UH UH – get down from there. Quick!
- TF Come and have a look here sweet. Have a look through ....
- GC Get down and don't hit that cord. Quick!
- TF Come on! So I'm interested – I guess like I grew up on a little farm and when my parents died, we all inherited it equally but then, you know, some of my brothers in fact bought me out. Would you imagine that or would you imagine that your boys will inherit like the whole value of -?
- GC Oh no. It's going to be divided equally between 'em because that's what we said, you know. Each one's entitled to what the, the other one is.
- TF So if -
- GC They'll buy one another out.
- TF Right. Right. So people much get huge mortgages out here?
- GC Yeah.
- TF And is there still a good living in, in beef, out here?
- GC Ohhh, there's a good living if you get the seasons to go with it but if you get droughts and that, well you can end up the other way.
- TF So over the years that, that you've been running the place, what would you describe as the cycle of, of flood and drought?

- GC Well we've had um, it hasn't been too bad. It was a bit dry when my husband first passed away and ah it was well and truly dry before that, but I've been pretty lucky with seasons and you know, it's not general rain but we've been lucky to get through, you know?
- TF And is the way that you feel about the land, does it differ according to whether it's, it's um flood or not? Or do you always love it?
- GC Oh I really enjoy it but I don't like droughts 'cause I don't like seeing stock and – stock die and that. And like as I said, you know, in a drought, you got the cattle really poor and you got dingoes there, well annoying 'em and they pull the stock down too. But they're pretty bad at the moment. I was talking to that grazier tonight and he was saying you know, he's seen it the worse they are.
- TF So that horse that you killed today for the dingoes, where did that horse come from?
- GC They're just brumbies. They haven't been broken in or anything.

End of Side A

- TF - horse that you killed today for the dingoes, where did that horse come from?
- GC They're just brumbies. They haven't been broken in or anything. No, I'd never kill an old working horse or that. You just wouldn't. They do - you just let 'em retire and die when they want to. But you get ah some of the brumbies come in and that but ah that's only just one that's been running there that's never been broken in and that.
- TF And Gladys you would have lived through the period of, of Marbo and Wik and Native Title. Has that, what impact have those kind of

big, big movements around land rights and native title, what impact have they had on you?

GC Well I think it's um like in my days when I was growing up and that, we all grew up together and there was black and white in Windorah and it was never mentioned. You were never allowed to say, you know, it was always coloured people. And ah today, well it's shocking you know? But everybody was sort of equal and now it's become the opposite.

TF So just explain that. What, what do you think's shocking about what's going on at the moment?

GC Well, in Windorah, in a little community like here, it's the dark people really against one another. It's really the half-caste I think are worse you know, which stir it up and it's a shame it ever came to Windorah 'cause everybody was treated equally.

TF So what, what, from your perception, what's the conflict within the Aboriginal community about?

GC Ohhh I dunno. They just sort of trying to be more authority over the rest of 'em and it's the ones that've lived here most of the time and probably they don't know the no-hows, you know? Like in the city you're right up with everything aren't you? Out here you're happy to go along and be happy and have what's ah comes. And like people here in their houses and that, well there's been a lot going on around here with that and it's wrong really.

TF What do you mean, people here in their houses?

GC Well you know if they get behind in their rent, they're being thrown out and some of them are the locals that've been here for years. And

it's happening to 'em all but I dunno. There seems to be little bit undergoings on or something.

TF So this community feels less happy to you –

GC Yeah, much.

TF .....

GC Yeah. Much ah, much so.

TF And who do you see as being responsible for that and you know, what might, what might shift things in your opinion?

GC Ohhh, I wouldn't like to say really because it's just something I don't think ah should happen really here. Yeah, I just think it's um one trying to be better than the other in 'em and the ah locals that've been here for years are quite happy to be themselves, you know?

TF And so is, is this about Aboriginal people who say they have traditional links to the land, fighting with Aboriginal people who've lived here for a long time but whose traditional country it wasn't? Is that what –

GC Not really. They just sorta, oh all different ones came here and they built houses and they've been living here and just whoever's on the committee you know. And ah, yeah, and the ah the locals feel a little bit um unhappy about it. Like the chap that works for me. Well he was in a house here and he was kicked out of it. But he was ah here for year, all his life.

TF And so why was –

GC He got behind in his rent and ah his wife was pretty sick and I think out here, you know, they just neglected answering it and then they never give 'em any choice. They just said they had to get out. They

evicted 'em really. And it's not that ah I think it's just out here. They never thought it would ever happen.

TF So things have been resolved from Brisbane rather than –

GC No, its got their own committee here, but I dunno. There's just rules for some and rules for others.

TF And how about, have you ever – is their any Native Title claim over Carranya?

GC No, not that I've heard ever. I don't think there'd – ah around here there'd be too many because you know, the dark people have all come back here. There's no really local people here.

TF How about um – thank you.

**So this is now Tape 57, is that correct?**

**JH 58.**

**TF 58. So this is camera tape 58. It's still DAT Tape 20. This is the third camera tape interviewing Gladys Cross and um and this is still the first DAT.**

TF So Gladys have you always been, been interested in children?

GC Yes I have been.

TF Give me some examples of, of that. Like how have children formed part of your life?

GC Yeah when I was um came in with my kids and that, and even out at Carranya, we'd always have a lot of kids going out there to stay or bringing 'em in and coming down here to eat and that, and ah little Johnny Play.... ? over here used to come here and sit up and – but if they're going past the front door there and I was cooking a curry or something, kids'd smell it and in they'd come and go to the cupboard

and get a plate and line up for a meal. But I didn't mind 'cause I was always – I enjoyed cooking and giving them something to eat.

TF So do you see yourself as having done part of traditional women's roles and men's roles and how would you say you'd, you'd handled that? You know, like what were the toughest bits?

GC Ohhh, I suppose there was times you know, it was er trying to do both. But I enjoyed it. I seemed to have plenty of energy when I was young and could cope with it, which people thought you know they couldn't see how I could do both but I didn't mind at all.

TF Oh just leave Granny's. No. Don't touch that one please.

GC Just go and play love. Go.

TF So are there any regrets you have in your life?

GC No, not really. I think I had a pretty good life really. And I was able to go but I just wished I had a bit more energy now to cope a bit better.

TF So what do you see as the future for you, you know? Like where do you expect to be say twenty years from now?

GC I'm not too sure. I don't think I'll leave here because my kids are here and my grandkids. Unless they moved away, I don't think I'd leave Windorah, because you know I think they'd miss me. I'd miss them too.

TF In lots, in lots of country families, the point at which the older generation stops kind of making the decisions about the place and the younger ones start to, can be conflictful and difficult. Do you envisage that or you think you, well how do you imagine that transition happening from you running the place to, to one of your kids doing it.

GC Oh, well I think if it came to that, I'd have to let them –  
Child Grandma, hello Grannie.

GC Shhhh. Drink. Get her a drink.

TF I was thinking Ryan could do that. Couldn't you Ryan?

JH Oh.

GC Yeah. He'll do it. You get your sister a drink.

TF Good on you. Well done.

GC Get your sister a drink. And ah –

Child Come on .....

GC Go with Ryan to get a drink.

TF Good girl. So go on. We were talking about how the transition will happen between you making the decisions and somebody else making the decisions. Have you started to talk about that in the family?

GC Yeah. We have done but I think that I would have to ah let the boys sort of when I drop out, I'd have to let them buy me out and let them have their own say. For the reason I think young people think there's a lot of money there, you know, and they can spend a lot more than what you've, and you've sort of gone without over the years. But I think they're all starting to realise now and it's making a difference.

TF Have your daughter-in-laws been involved in the property?

GC Yeah. Yeah. No, they've all been good. Yeah, they're all very good you know, and all very supportive towards their husbands and everything.

TF So is there anything I haven't asked you about Gladys, that you think it's important for me to understand um about the life of Channel Country women?

GC Ohhh, not really I don't think.



TF Tell me actually a little bit about your Mother's life, because your Mother was Sylvia Geiger wasn't it?

GC Yeah. She married Geiger. She was a Lizman ? Well Mum's life was pretty – well um Mum worked hard, but Mum enjoyed what she was doing. I think that's where I get it from. Like she had a lot of goats and she was involved with a lot of kids. Like all the kids went up and milked goats and got their little billy of milk and come home and went to their different homes with it and no, but they were always there to help her with 'em and she had sheep and they all enjoyed it with her. And she always had a car load of kids going everywhere and pigs and things like that full of people but they all, she sorta looked after 'em and then everybody got some, but the kids all helped too, everybody's kids. And um

TF (coughing) Sorry.

GC That was always um (phone ringing) then you know I think the same with me, you know, you just sort of do it too.

TF So when you look at your Mother's life, your life and your daughters' lives, like Narelle and Marilyn, what strikes you as the differences between them? Or is it more the similarities?

GC Oh I think out here you know, I think my daughters are very much like me. They're all involved with animals and that. You can get some that just don't want anything to do with anything like that. So I think they're all much country girls. We're all very country-minded.

TF And in the relationship between the husbands and wives, do you think there's been obvious differences across the generations?

GC Ah no. They're all pretty well. I think out here you know, you're more or less pick someone that will, that you enjoy doing things with.

TF How common is divorce out here Gladys?

GC Oh – hasn't been anything like it but there has been a few bust-ups lately. In marriages and that. Sometimes you know it's, I don't know, whether it's young, too young or – some people think you know, when you get married, like I thought when I got married well I'd be able to do all them things that I couldn't do when I was working five days a week but I found out I was working seven days a week and nearly 24 hours around the clock. And you didn't get – and I think a lot of young people go into it to the same and when it's not what they want, they don't even try to make it work. That's a lot of it.

TF So how does this community handle marriage breakdown? You know, what happens say when people are on the land and they split up?

GC Well, it's not real good. Ah I dunno of anyone – oh there has been a couple here but not involved with a properties you know. Only just been working on it. But it's hard and it's something you don't like to see in these parts anyway.

TF So do you expect that there'll be Cross's and Geigers here? You know, do you, would you like to see your grandchildren growing up around here?

GC Well I would like to. I think that you know, that could happen to because my lot are pretty well, well they like it here. Especially my sons and that so I think they'll be around here somewhere. And if the grandkids are like us, well they'll still have it born in 'em in to stay around but there's not a lot of jobs here and there's work, that's the only place is you've gotta go you know to find something. Like the Post Office was opened and on the exchange. I worked on the exchange at the Post Office for a few years and that. Well that was

about three people could work up there and that's all gone so it cuts back all the work doesn't it? Apart from the stations there's not much around.

TF So you think overall, there's fewer people around now than when you were a child?

GC Ahhh, yeah. There is in the town. But there's a lot more passing through. It's becoming a lot busier. Like ours were only at different times, drovers and things like that. But the ah ah there was more, a few more jobs ..... around.

TF Was this pub one where drovers and stockmen would come and stay out the back for a few weeks in between jobs? That sort of thing?

GC Yeah, well this is um the old pub was home away for everyone and we'd cook there and really, they had a dining room and they had the kitchen and we had our drunks little room beside it. But more people ate in that kitchen than they did up in there because I think you know, we'd laugh and joke and they were off the road and looking for company and we'd all talk and cook 'em a meal down there and May McGrath owned the pub and well she was leasing it, but she ah let it go on. She didn't care you know, whether they ate up in the dining room or down there.

TF So tell me about the drunks room. How did it work here?

GC Well they used to get their beer in a wheelbarrow and take it in and when it was empty, they'd go and get another lot. And it was – they'd just get in there and um just drink until the drovers come along and they'd pick up the lot that had had a skinful and they'd move on and the rest would stay there until they, and the next drover came.

TF And so they'd all sleep in the one room? Like where would they sleep?

GC They only had those old stretchers with a mattress on and, you know, if they didn't sort of worry and roll their swags out on it and camp in the room.

TF So did you find that disgusting as a young girl?

GC Not really 'cause like the rats used to be bad at – we had a few rat plagues and you'd hear the tins and that and they'd just open tins of meat and things like that. But they were cleaned, you know? They didn't, weren't left there dirty or anything. The rooms were cleaned out and they'd just um sleep and drink in there.

TF So –

GC And didn't annoy anybody else.

TF So when did that tradition die out?

GC Well the old pub got burnt down and that stopped a lot of it.

TF So what do you remember about the pub burning down? Were you around at the time?

GC No, I wasn't really, but it wasn't good because it was a, oh well the pub there now is a lot better. But the old pub was a home away from home. They loved the old pub. When all the drovers are all there, you know? The rooms they were just old. Ohh it wasn't nice lino, you know, it was just that old rubberoid stuff and then they'd just leave their swags and saddles there until the next drover came and um May sort of didn't worry as long as they got a meal, their money was in the bar. All we had to see they were fed and if anyone went into the horrors, well she'd make 'em egg flips and we had to see they were looked after and that's – you know, it was more of a home for 'em.

TF So you just took it for granted having –

GC Yeah.

TF OK, I think that's all my questions. Thank you very much Gladys.  
It's been terrific.

GC Yeah.

(End of interview)