

**INTERVIEW WITH GLADYS CROSS**  
**22 June 2000**

**Refers to tape 58\_BVC\_SP**

**Topics in Bold**

TF = Trish GC = Gladys

**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. 58\_BC\_SP**

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 10:01:11:22 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 Plager 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 10:02:01:00 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 10:02:36:08 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 **Women/Land/Retirement**

10:02:53:16 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 **Inheritance**

10:04:16:14 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 10:04:48:22 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 **Women/Work/Pioneers**

10:05:25:22 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 10:06:13:20

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 **Country Girls**

10:06:40:10 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 10:07:26:08 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 **Women/Land**

10:08:49:06 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 **Pubs/Alcohol/Drovers**

10:10:10:16 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 10:10:50:12 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 10:11:16:20 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 **Drovers/Alcohol**

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     **Alcohol**

10:12:07:18   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.                   10:12:52:10

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)

More Interview, no transcript.

Shots of grandchildren 10:13:03:10 – 10:13:32:00

Gladys talking about alcohol, drinking, women drinking, swearing in bar, May not drinking, grog parties, good times but wouldn't go back, TV ruined communication(?) social life, telephone. TO: 10:17:49:20

Still of Gladys and boy – boy and dog to 10:18:45:00