

INTERVIEW WITH BID CAMPBELL

Recorded 2 June 2000

Updated 15 December 2009.

Timecode refers to tapes 03_BC_DV

Topics in Bold

I = Interviewer

R = Respondent

SIDE A

I We're partially in camera tape 3, it's 2 June 2000, it's Trish FitzSimons sound recording, Erica Addis on camera. We're interviewing Bid Campbell in her house in Mt Isa, and this is the Channels of History project. (Tape 03_BC_DV)

00:09:13:12 What I'd like you to start by doing, Bid, is telling me when you were born and your name when you were born, and where you were born.

R 00:09:22:06 I was born in Winton in 1917, 28 February, and was called Elizabeth. It's the only name I have. Mum had run out of names, I think, so I got one name. Dad's special I was.

I 00:09:41:20 So Elizabeth who?

R 00:09:52:19 Just Elizabeth McGlinchy. That was my parents' surname.

I Now I've just got a moment of interruption there. Just tell me your name again.

R Elizabeth Campbell ... Elizabeth McGlinchy. I'm Elizabeth Campbell now but ...

I I'm just going to adjust this.

Okay, Bid, I'd love you to tell me where and when you were born and what your name was when you were born.

R 00:10:07:16 I was born in Winton on 28 February 1917 and I was called Elizabeth McGlinchy, my parents' surname.

I And where did you come in the family?

R

00:10:23:00 I was ... my brother and sister were twins, they were the first McGlinchy family, but before that Mum had been married before and the she had three children in the Robinson family – two boys and a girl. And then she married my father and she had twins, Carrie and Brian, and then I was the third child.

I

R

00:11:00:06 Yeah, second family. So then there was ... well I think we came out to Macsland in 1917 because I was the baby and I can't, you know, I know Mum said I was very small when they came to Maxland. And, well I grew up there more or less and, you know, in the bad years. In those years there was no money, there was nobody, there was no money, you got no money for wool. You more or less ... Mum used to make butter and take it into Boulia and sell it to the hotel and with the groceries, like that.

Education

And as for schooling, well we didn't get very much of a schooling because in those days the teacher used to come out, have lessons, and then six months later he'd come back and view what you did and, of course, you only had your parents to teach you – Mum – and she had everything else, like we ended up, she ended up having seven McGlinchy children and so she had her hands full and we lived in a bower shed. It was a big bower shed, dirt floor. I think the kitchen area was uh, the kitchen was sort of made of tins. It must have been ...

00:12:20:16

I

R

you windows went, and then when you had ... I think, I can remember our beds were made of green hide.

I What's green hide?

R **Education**

00:12:48:16 That's bullock hide. Made out of bullock hide. And we used to, they were made with four, four forky sticks, like that, you know, on each end, and there was a big cross like that, and another one went down there and this green hide was sort of strapped over it and punched it, or whatever they used in those days. And when it rained, of course, green hide would shrink, like hobbles for horses were made out of green hide. It was, you know, used for lots of (?) and we used to hate the rain. We used to think, 'Oh, we've got terrible hard beds', you know. That's how we lived, I mean, I can't remember ever being terribly mistful in any way, you know, we had a good life. We used to clear out, of course, when the teacher came. We'd make sure that we weren't around. He wouldn't catch us because half the time we didn't do our work. There was no work done so we'd get into trouble over that. 00:13:50:02

I You say your family moved to Maxland.

R That was the property ...

I Now I think that was the soldier

R Yes, it was, yes. After the war.

I After the First World War?

R Yes, First World, yeah.

I So, had your father been in the First World War?

R **Land/Title**

00:14:05:16 No, my older brother, step-brother Charlie Robinson. He drew it. He drew the block but he drew it for Mum because Mum had the money and the stock and he was just come back from the war. So it was

really her property but it was in his name and in later years they drew another block up on the Georgina and they swapped that with Charlie for Maxland, so he got the other block. 00:14:30:18

I So Charlie drew Maxland in a ballot and your parents moved onto Maxland ...

R Yes.

I ... but when later they got another block, they gave it to Charlie?

R Yes, as payment.

I Were you selectors? Is that what you called a selection?

R **Land/CC Environment**

00:14:50:06 Yes. Yes. Yes, selections, that's all they were. They were only, they were really starvation blocks of, I think, 15,000 acres which isn't a living area in this country, because you're out, you know, it's not like down there in Sydney and around there, you know, on the coast you get regular rain and out here you don't, see. You might go years and get two or three inches and that would be it, like, and then you'd have a drought.

I So you mostly had comfortable beds but no rain?

R 00:15:18:02 No rain. Mmmm. And there must have been about ... the first I can remember was going to Boulia when I must have been about four, four-year-old or five-year-old, and that was the ... June would probably know when her grandmother was married. I did have photos but I and she'd be able to tell, and I can remember Aboriginals and the corroboree down on the river.

I This was the Georgina River?

R **History/Race Relations**

00:15:48:10 No, this was the Burke River, the river that goes through Boulia. And they used to corroboree down on a big waterhole. They called

it The One Mile. And, of course, I'd never heard that sort of noise and it sort of stuck in my mind and that was the corroboree, the blacks' corroboree. But now I see in the tourist books they used to corroboree out on the Stanley Ridges. I can't remember any Aboriginals out on Stanley Ridges.

I So when you say you'd never heard that sort of noise. Tell me what you remember about that corroboree.

R 00:16:21:00 Oh, you know how they go on with the funny noises they made and, you know, well I couldn't really, it's like a sort of a sing-song sort of a noise, and crying sort of, like when the death, when anyone died they'd have that same sort of thing go on. So, you know, what the noise was I really can't remember that much, but I can remember a terrible racket, you know, that went on.

I And what would your parents have told you about that noise, or told you about ...?

R 00:16:54:02 They just said that was the Aboriginals' corroboree down on the river. And because Dad had been a drover, he'd heard it many times. I don't think Mum had heard it that much because I don't think there was very many Aboriginals around Winton where she came to. See, she came out to Winton from England.

I Now how did your mother land up in Winton? I'm interested in that story.

R 00:17:17:20 Well, she came out from England to Townsville but we always thought she was, you know, sent out, you know, as a convict, but when we went investigating and found out that she was, she came out and paid her passage, her own passage out, and she got a job at Stanton Hill with a doctor. And she stayed, I think, about six months in Townsville and then she wanted to come out west, and she came out west. I think she was on the first train to Winton and that's how she come to Winton, out there.

I And I think there was a story, wasn't there, wasn't she going to go to a property?

R Yes, she was.

I Could you tell us that story?

R 00:17:58:00 Yes. She was to go down to this property at Diamantina ... I think it was Diamantina Lakes, down below Winton, on the Diamantina, and when she got, she had to go by horseback because in those days you had no buggies or anything and this mailman just had horses, so she rode a horse to the Diamantina Lakes, which was a fair way. I'm not too sure of the distance but there was a few hundred miles.

I Several hundred kilometres, yes.

R **Gender Relations/Female Publicans**

Mmmm, yes, yes, easy. 00:18:27:20 And when she got there, the mailman said, 'There's only men here'. See, she didn't know that there was only men and she said, 'I'll stay overnight'. He was to leave and go back, to be on his way back, and he said, 'Well stay overnight and if you don't like it,' he said, 'I'll take you back to Winton' which she didn't, wouldn't stop because he thought, you know, she was only a young girl and all men, though probably in those days they were all gentlemen, not like today. But she went back to Winton and got a job in Winton and stayed there until she married Robinson and then, of course, he died on the Winton road. You've probably seen his, you see the sign if you go out Winton way, into his grave. And she had three children and he died and she sold the horses and, you know, the wagon and bought the 20 Mile Hotel. 00:19:26:10

I Your mother did?

R 00:19:28:02 Mmmm. And that was a stop for a mail change in the old Cobb & Co days. Every twenty miles there was a mail change and she run that and that's where she met my father. It was a good hotel.

I So she would have been a very young woman ...

R Very young.

I ... when she was buying this hotel.

R Yes.

I What year do you think this would have been and about how old would she have been?

R 00:19:50:10 Oh. She was about 18, I think. She was 17, I think, when she came out to Australia, so she was married when she was 18, and I think Charlie was nine when Robinson died. About nine or ten, I think, that's the oldest boy. So she would have been in her early twenties. She wouldn't have been in her late twenties. And well she had to rear the children, I mean, you got no help in those days.

I I'm very interested in women in pubs out in the Channel Country because clearly the pubs were very important, weren't they. They were the banks and the mail change.

R **Pubs/Childbirth**

00:20:30:15 Oh, yes. That was the mail change. Yeah, yeah. Plus where people stayed. That's the only accommodation you had. And she had her first child, I think, at ... it was a mail change. She sold that, this was before she bought the pub, when Charlie was born. He was born at Richard's Creek on the Winton road, and I think that was a mail change, but it's not there now. But probably if you look through some of the archives in Winton, it probably was a mail change. And she had her first child there. She, I think she was three days in labour with just a midwife, you know, but Charles was born anyway and she survived. Then she had a daughter.

I So if she was running the pub after her first husband had died, she must have been quite a tough character, your mother?

R Oh, she was. 00:21:19:16 My word. She had plenty of backbone. Nobody put anything over on her. Very fair, very fair woman, but no, she wouldn't stand anyone ... she'd stand up for her rights.

I Am I right that women and Aboriginal people couldn't go into pubs but that the pubs were often run by women?

R Run by women. 00:21:41:00 Yes, that's right. Oh, no, even when I was a girl, you didn't go into a hotel. The first person I ever saw sittin' at the bar in Boulia was a matron, Matron Faulkner, Ellie Faulkner. She used to go in. She was an English matron and she'd been in Australia a long time, but oh, she was as tough as anything old Ellie, you know. She'd do anything and go anywhere. And she'd go in there and line up with the men and drink with 'em. And we used to think, 'Fancy Ellie going into that pub' but now everyone goes into a pub. 00:22:12:08

I So with your Mum, as a young woman running this pub, how do you think she handled that because as an 18-year-old, if she'd run away from a station full of men, in the pub ... ?

R 00:22:26:08 Yes. I suppose she got toughened. See, she was only a young English girl when she came out, you know, she wouldn't be very wise, would she? But she learnt, you know, how to look after herself after that, I think. No, she managed. She managed.

I I've heard stories about a Mrs Craigie who used to run a pub in Boulia.

R 00:22:50:08 I can't find a Craigie ever running a pub in Boulia. I can't find a Craigie. I've got my brother's book that was written on Boulia, the early days of Boulia. I'll let you take that and have a look at it.

I I'd be very interested to have a look and I'll have to go obviously and do some more research but one of the stories about that Mrs Craigie was ...

R Who would that be?

I Well I heard about Mrs Craigie from her niece Patricia Hodgkinson who's about your age now. And what Patricia said is that the men would come back from droving and have a cheque and they would give the cheque to her aunt to sort of drink and eat at the pub and when the cheque was gone, she'd say, 'See you'.

R Mmmm. They used to do that too. True.

I What did your mother tell you about that?

R **Droving/Alcohol**

00:23:49:18 Well, she was more in the mail change, I think, see. There wasn't such a great stream of drovers that would go through Boulia. Like, see, all the big mobs of cattle would come down from the Territory, come through Boulia, that was the, where you went through like. That was the ... they'd come down the Georgina, or they'd come down the Burke, into Boulia, and then go whichever, like down Adelaide way or Winton way, and that was the main place for the drovers. Like when I was at Strathalbert at Macsland there'd be, you know, mobs of 1,500 in a mob droving, being droving with one drovers, so those days are all gone, of course. And then I suppose the men would just drink, get finished their jobs and drink their money. But a lot of them wouldn't. A lot of them were just drunkards, like, that's the way they lived. 00:24:46:00

I So this 20 Mile Pub that your Mum ran, what was the closest town, do you know?

R Winton. Winton.

I Winton. So it was 20 miles out from Winton?

R 00:24:55:04 Out from Winton, along the Winton road, yes. 20 Mile. It was there ... I can remember it was still remains of it when my children were going to school, because once we were going into Winton and putting them on the train and it was, you could still see part of the dam, where they'd built a dam, still was there so ... but everything else was gone. It's like the Min Min Hotel, see, that's another hotel, what they call the Min Min Light, there's the Min Min Hotel.

I So your Mum must have had a bit of money from her first husband.

R 00:25:27:10 Oh, she did after she sold the horses and wagon and everything, she had a bit of money. And then Charlie, she sent Charlie had a

fair education. He went away to Nudgee. Mum was a great believer in education and there was a man, he was running the Borbridge Hotel, no store, in Middleton, and he gave Charlie a job when he came back from the what's-a-name, the ...

I First World War?

R No, when he came back from school, from ...

I Nudgee.

R 00:26:02:02 Nudgee College. And he worked for Borbridge in Winton, in Middleton, and then he got a job in Winton, and that's where he met his wife, in Winton. She was an English girl too.

I So going back to your childhood, then, you were on Maxland, which was this selection.

R Mmmm.

I Had it been part of a big station?

R 00:26:25:00 Yes. Yes, Winton. And Warenda. Warenda was from the Hamilton, oh well right the other side of the Hamilton, right out as far as Min Min Hotel, I think, where the old Min Min Hotel was. Right back to Boulia. And that was all part of Woorinda.

I I know in some parts of Australia that the squatters who were on the stations resented the people ...

R Oh, they did.

I ... that were on the selections. They didn't want to sell that land.

R Yes.

I Do you want to just talk to me a little bit about that?

R **Land/Class**

00:27:00:10 Yeah, there was one incident with my mother. They took up Maxland and the overseer on one of the outstations of Warenda, Goodwin, which they ended up owning in later years, and he ... there was a waterhole on Macsland and Mum was trying to keep it there for her own stock and he was sort of, he was letting the cattle all come in onto it, and she would hunt them away and chase them on, and he cracked his whip around her and said, 'I'll see you carry your swag, you ground life' and she said, 'I'll see you carry your swag, Lily' and she sure did see him when the Depression came. He did carry his swag and she was still on Maxland, so she had her revenge. And, no, they resented, yes, they didn't like that country being taken off them.

I So it sounds, as you're describing your mother here, it doesn't sound at all like that the land was just your father's business and she was just in the house.

R No, no.

I It sound like she was ...

R **Gender Relations**

00:28:08:00 She was the boss. Dad was Irish. Says everything, doesn't it? Yes, he was Irish, Dad. Dad would take ... Dad trusted everyone. He thought everyone was good. Mum didn't. Mum used to say, 'You've got to know people before you know them'.

I What else did your Mum say? I'm interested in mothers' sayings. What were the things your mother told you to guide you in the world?

R 00:28:35:20 Oh, she told, she used to always say there was no such thing as 'can't'. No such word. She'd say it didn't matter what you were doing, you did your best. And that was it. You couldn't get, you couldn't slack off, you just had to keep trying.

I And so it was sheep that you ran on Maxland?

R **Women's Work**

00:28:56:06 Mmmm. She used to ride to Winton to do business. She used to get on her horse and ride to Winton. Now that was three hundred and something miles. I don't know what it is in kilometres but that was miles in her days and she'd be away a week. She'd ride the first horse to ahhh Min Min, not Min Min, Lucknow Station, and then she'd get a fresh horse there and ride on to Middleton, and then get a fresh horse at Middleton and then on to the next station, get a fresh horse there and she'd bring those horses back, see, and eventually come back to her own horse.

I And who would look after you while your mother was away?

R 00:29:37:14 Well, once my brother Charlie looked after us, and we were very pleased to see Mum coming back because I think the only thing Charlie could make was spotted rice pudding. I don't know what that is today. I can't say I ever want to see it or know it after Charlie finished. We were so pleased to see Mum come back because Charlie, that's the only thing he could make, was this sort of, it was a rice, boiled rice and put currants in it, I think, and sugar and whatever. It was terrible stuff anyway.

I And that'd be dinner?

R 00:30:09:18 That'd be our meal. Mum cooked up a lot of food, you know, bread and stuff that would keep, but we ran out, of course, before she got back.

I And how about your Dad? What would he be doing while this was going on?

R 00:30:23:22 Oh, well now where was Dad once? He also had, he had a wagon he used to cart wool to Selwyn. That was the big mining town in those days. He used to go up there and bring loading back from Selwyn. He must have been away because Dad wasn't there. He probably was away on one of these, with his wagon. That's how, you know, we got money. Otherwise there would be no money.

I Come the late twenties there was a big drought, wasn't there...

R Yes.