

## INTERVIEW WITH GLADYS CROSS

22 June 2000

Refers to tape 57\_BVC\_SP

Topics in Bold

TF = Trish GC = Gladys

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. **57\_BC\_SP**

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 **Gender Relations/Division of Labour**

09:01:20:00 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 09:02:19:20 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 **Maude Schaffer: Women Managers**

09:02:55:10 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 09:03:54:06 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 09:04:28:10 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 **JC Pub**

09:04:55:10 When they bought it? Yeah, well the men – it was right close to the Waverney 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 **Maude Schaffer**

09:05:37:10 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 **Gender Relations/Health**

09:06:46:10 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 09:07:35:02 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 09:07:57:00 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 09:08:48:00 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 09:09:36:10 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 09:10:40:00 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 09:11:32:10 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 **Drought**

09:12:04:10 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 **Gender Relations**

09:13:00:04 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 09:13:23:00 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 09:13:45:10 Yeah. Yeah and the kids used to go and then you know, you'd grill the rib bones the night you'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 **Physical Hardships: Rotten Meat**

09:14:16:20 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 09:15:14:10 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 09:15:31:10 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 09:15:55:20 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 09:16:37:00 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 09:17:18:10 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 09:17:52:09 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 **Health/Gender Relations**
- 09:18:40:06 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 09:19:34:10 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 **Women/Land**

09:20:17:00 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 **Women Managers/ Pastoral Industry**

09:20:56:06 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 09:21:36:04 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 **Women Managers**

09:22:08:04 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 09:22:44:12 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 **Inheritance**

09:20:40:00 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 09:24:25:00 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 09:25:03:10 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 Currareva 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 09:25:40:10 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 09:26:11:20 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 09:27:52:12 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 **Drought**
- 09:28:11:20 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 **Dingoes**
- 09:28:40:10 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 09:29:14:06 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 Mabo 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 **Race Relations**

09:30:00:04 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 **Aboriginal Intra-conflict**

09:30:33:00 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 09:31:04:10 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 09:31:39:12 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 09:32:16:10 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 09:32:59:10 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 09:33:33:12 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 **Native Title**
- 09:34:20:10 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. 09:34:34:06
- TF How about um – thank you.

Shots of grandchild end of tape