

INTERVIEW WITH BID CAMPBELL

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Timecode refers to tapes 03_BC_DV

Topics in Bold

I = Interviewer

R = Respondent

I ... and then that fed into the Depression.

R Mmmm.

I How did your family get on there?

R There was the big drought.

I Oh, yes. How your family ... it was about 1925, was it, when the drought came through?

R **Drought**

00:31:33:06 Ahhh, '26 I think. '26 it started. Just when my sister was born, the youngest sister was born in the old stone house in Boulia. You know the old stone house is still there. And then we went back to Maxland after she was born and the drought came really bad. So we all went on the road and took the sheep on the road and we went right up the Georgina to the cross the (?) oh what do they call it there? Nearly on to the Flinders River, you know, across the ...

I Gregory Downs?

R 00:32:04:02 Gregory, Gregory River. And then across to the Flinders, and we came back to Julia Creek and that's where we went to school. We were sent away to boarding school there. Mum sent us to boarding school.

I And why in drought was being on the road better than staying at home?

R **Drought/On the track**

00:32:23:14 Well there was no food at home, see, and there was feed up the Georgina and going across to the Gregory and up in the Gulf country there was rain but there was nothing in the Boulia district. Oh there were

storms, I think, after they left, there were storms there but nothing to keep your stock alive for very long. And it was all over, all over the district, it wasn't just an isolated area. It was everywhere. And they were away three years, I think, with those stock on the road, then. And then Mum and us kids all came back to Maxland and the boys stayed with Dad and they brought the sheep home from Julia Creek, and we were home.

I So do you remember the discussion, because you would have been about what ...?

R Oh, I was about ah ...

I ... nine years old.

R 00:33:10:12 Yeah, I was about nine or ten when we went on the road.

I Do you remember the decision to go on the road? Can you remember the build up to that?

R 00:33:19:17 Uhhh, no I can't remember much about that. No. I can't remember very much about that, no. I can remember the twelve months we, or the year's school we had in Boulia. I can remember that but I can't remember much about that, only when we got on the road, you know, because we got up to all the tricks under the sun, I think, you know.

I Like what? What's your memory of life on the road?

R **Childhood**

00:33:43:10 Ohhh, oh God, we did everything, I think. When we got out of sight of Mum and Dad we did everything with the horses.

I Give me some examples.

R 00:33:50:16 We used to put hot stones under their tail to make them buck and all this sort of thing, you know. We'd have mini rodeos sort of thing. Oh, we did all these things. Chased the kangaroos and chase them across the rivers into the big waterholes to see how they swam. We did it. Oh well, I suppose, we just made our own fun sort of thing, you know.

I And was being a girl, were there particular things that you couldn't do because you were a girl?

R 00:34:18:10 No. No. No, we used to drive the sheep during the day and break them at night and had to ... we'd have a day off. Each one of us would have one day off which would come round, sort of okay it's and our day off was to take the horses from this camp to the next camp and hobble them out, you know, give them water so they've got water and put them out and feed and hobble them. So that was our day off. And, of course, collected the goods for cook, which Mum was, the cook. And Nell and Micky, they were the two babies, they were little ones, they didn't ride horses but Carrie, Brian and me, we had to ride the horses.

I So it was just your family doing this?

R 00:35:06:00 Oh, no. No. No. There was nearly ... no, there was about four other families – McDougalls and some, I think it was the McDougalls and Wells's and Gibsons, I think was the other family. No, a lot of people just left.

I And you would travel together with these other families?

R 00:35:24:02 Oh, well, we might have been ... no, not all together, no. No. Unless we stayed somewhere for a long time, but we were never allowed to stay very long unless you agisted, you know, country somewhere, which they did when they got ...

I So unless you paid?

R 00:35:41:02 Mmmm. Yes, agisted a paddock off somebody. But they didn't do that until they got to uh ... and, of course, the first stop was at Urandangie which isn't there any more, but in those days it was quite a big town. It was a drovers' town and now I think it's only a hotel there, a pub there and a store, as far as I hear. And we stayed there because there was a big common, that was the common around the towns they had, you know, for drovers and their horses. We stayed there and shore there, because shearing

was there, and then we went on, sort of just kept going and moving until we got up to the Flinders, across, you know, to the Flinders and ...

I Flinders Crossing?

R **Land**

00:36:27:06 No, the Flinders River. The big Flinders River. And we came across there and they agisted country there and we were there for about twelve months, I think, and we were away at school for those twelve months while they agisted and then, of course, the rain came to the Boulia district, and they came back. And since then, after they came back, the government decided they needed more country, see, it wasn't big enough. 1,500 acres wasn't big enough so they allotted people, granted them more country.

I You said before, I think, 15,000 which I was surprised but was it 1,500?

R Yeah, 15,000 acres.

I It was 15,000 but they got an extra 1,500?

R 00:37:10:00 No, they got an extra 70,000 acres I think. They ended up with over 100,000 acres.

I Wow!

R 00:37:15:16 See that's only a living area in the drought areas. It's like where my daughter's living now at Crogan's Creek. I think there's a million acres nearly in that country but it's a lot of waste country, you know, it's a lot of sand hills and spinifex and unusable countryside. It's not like down, you know, in the, closer to the good country.

I And was it leasehold or freehold land, do you know?

R **Land/Title**

00:37:44:08 Oh, no, it was leasehold. It was all leasehold. There was very, there's not very much freehold out in this country I don't think. Is there very much down on the coastal areas, around Sydney and those? I suppose there would be.

I Much more, yeah, closer in. So the fact that it was leasehold, did that get discussed much?

R 00:38:03:08 No, I don't think so. You just paid each year and you got a thirty-year lease and that's how ... that was it, I think. See, I really don't know what the difference is really with, you know, the leasehold and the other. You owned it, I suppose, if you ... or Dad owned it.

I There's coming at the moment, there's some discussion because on leasehold properties there can be Native Title and on freehold there can't be. Do you remember, were there Aboriginal people living around Maxland at all, either in ...?

R **Traditional Aboriginal**

00:38:40:06 No. No. Not around Maxland. They only lived on the big rivers and the big waterholes and then they'd go walkabout after big rains, but they never lived in those areas. No, no. Never at Maxland.

I So say when you went to school at Boulia, were there Aboriginal kids at that school?

R **Race Relations**

00:38:59:06 No, no. Oh there might have been a few little half-caste ones that people sort of took into their homes but you must remember, you know in those days half-caste children, the blacks didn't want them. The Aboriginals didn't want them. They were half-castes, they weren't their skin so they'd just take them, leave them to die or whatever. So quite a lot of them were taken for that reason, that we knew of anyway. I mean, we never had very much to do with them but ...

I So you knew white families that had half-caste Aboriginal kids?

R 00:39:38:10 Mmmm, yes. Yes, half-caste children, yes. They weren't wanted, see. They were ... of course nobody wants to know that today, do they? They'd say that you're a racist if you dared to say something like that.

It's true. I don't know what you know about it, what your opinions are, but ...

I I haven't heard those stories.

R No.

I

R **Race Relations**

00:40:07:20 Not too many people left to tell them, is there? Like, if they told the truth, a lot of them do, will tell you the truth too, that they would have died if they hadn't been taken and then, you know, you ended up with a ... well, I mean, I often think if I'd have been a half-caste kid I'd have probably ended up with one of these squares on my head and a university education instead of having no education. So, I mean, they weren't terribly deprived. Like with Charlie Perkins and all those, they all ended up with a good education, didn't they, and went to uni?

I There's a few, yes. With education, it's interesting that your brother had been sent to Nudgee College. Do you think the fact that you got ... so you got a year's education in Boulia and then a year at boarding school in Charters Towers, was that anything to do with you being a girl or was it more ...?

R 00:41:03:09 No, it was because they couldn't afford it. They couldn't afford it. There was no money. I mean, you just imagine educating seven of us, it took a lot of money in those days, even though it didn't cost that much, but still like today it costs a lot more but then again it's a different era, isn't it? Like when my kids, my children all went away to boarding school but if I had to send them now, I'd be paying a lot more money. You know, I think I had five of them once away at boarding school. It's the only way they got educated. 00:41:41:09

I So you got sent away to Charters Towers.

R Like most people are out working. My husband was out working when he was eleven years old. But, you know, they ...