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Full transcript of an interview with

ALFRED KLINGBERG

on 11 February 1986

by Beth Robertson

for

'SA SPEAKS': AN ORAL HISTORY OF LIFE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA BEFORE 1930

Recording available on cassette

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Collateral Material in File 8602 includes:
Photographs ~~P8602A-G, photocopies of excerpts from Eckert and Klingberg family history publications.~~

Cover Illustration Scenes from the Klingberg farm, Arden Vale, about 1916; brother George by the winnower and Alf carting wheat to Quorn. The Klingbergs prided themselves on their horse teams. P8602F,G.

PREFACE

Heinrich Alfred Klingberg, the third youngest of eleven children, was born to German parents in 1898 on the family wheat farm at Arden Vale, nine miles north of Quorn. The Arden Vale School closed through lack of pupils in 1910 and after a further nine months at a German school in Emu Downs for his Confirmation studies, Alfred began work. He spent four and a half years on his brother-in-law's farm at Wyacca before returning to the family farm when two older brothers went to war. However, by 1921 it was evident, even though his father had bought two other properties, that the farms could not support the three remaining sons and his father offered to settle him on a thirty acre block in Quorn. Alfred worked for the Council and a brother-in-law before a vacancy occurred for a labourer in the Loco Sheds at the Railway Yards. The same year (1921) he built a home on the block and married a local girl. Their two children were born in 1923 and '25. When the Commonwealth Railways took over the Great Northern Line in 1926, Mr Klingberg was placed at the Mile End Loco Yard (he'd requested Peterborough) where he soon specialised as an engine greaser.

Mr Klingberg was 87 years of age at the time of the interview.

Mr Klingberg was tentative at first but warmed to the task. There is a good deal of background noise in his room, particularly the constant low hum of a fan and a fridge which cuts in and out. There are also some noises from outside. The record levels of the tape recordings are relatively low as Mr Klingberg is quietly spoken but clarity is good.

The interview session resulted in two hours and fifty five minutes of tape recorded information.

'S.A. Speaks: An Oral History of Life in South Australia before 1930' was a Jubilee 150 project conducted under the auspices of the History Trust of South Australia for two years and two months ending December 1986. The Interviewees are broadly representative of the population of South Australia as it was in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Selection of Interviewees was guided by a Sex and Occupation Sample calculated from the 1921 Census and Interviewees were suggested, in the main, by people who responded to 'S.A. Speaks' publicity. Each interview was preceded by an unrecorded preliminary interview during which details about the Interviewee's family history and life story were sought to help develop a framework for the interview.

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NOTES TO THE TRANSCRIPT

Readers of this oral history transcript should bear in mind that it is a record of the spoken word. It was the policy of the Transcriptionist, Chris Gradolf, and the Interviewer, as editor, to produce a transcript that is, so far as possible, a verbatim transcript that preserves the Interviewee's manner of speaking and the informal, conversational style of the interview. Certain conventions of transcription have been applied (i.e. the omission of meaningless noises, redundant false starts and a percentage of the Interviewee's crutch words). Also, each Interviewee was given the opportunity to read the transcript of their interview after it had been proofread by the Interviewer. The Interviewee's suggested alterations have been incorporated in the text (see below). On the whole, however, the document can be regarded as a raw transcript.

Researchers using the original tape recording of this interview are cautioned to check this transcript for corrections, additions or deletions which have been made by the Interviewer or the Interviewee but which will not occur on the tapes. Minor discrepancies of grammar and sentence structure made in the interest of readability can be ignored but significant changes such as deletions of information or correction of fact should be, respectively, duplicated or acknowledged when the tape recorded version of this interview is used for broadcast or publication on cassettes.

Abbreviations

The Interviewee, H. Alfred Klingberg, is referred to by the initials AK in all editorial insertions in the transcript.

Punctuation

Square brackets [ ] indicate material in the transcript that does not occur on the original tape recording.

The Interviewee's initials after a word, phrase or sentence in square brackets, i.e. [word or phrase AK] indicates that the Interviewee made this particular insertion or correction. All uninitialled parentheses were made by the Interviewer.

An series of dots, ... indicates an untranscribable word or phrase.

Sentences that were left unfinished in the normal manner of conversation are shown ending in three dashes, - - -.

Spelling

Wherever possible the spelling of proper names and unusual terms has been verified. Where uncertainty remains the word has been marked with a cross in the right hand margin of the Interview Log and Data Sheet which can be consulted in the Interview File.

Typeface

The Interviewer's questions are shown in bold print.

'S.A. Speaks: An Oral History of Life in South Australia Before 1930'
Beth Robertson interviewing Mr H. Alfred Klingberg [redacted] on 11 February 1986

TAPE 1 SIDE A

Could you just start by telling me your full name?

Heinrich Alfred Klingberg.

Were you known as Heinrich?

No, always called Alfred. I don't know why. Whether it was an easier way they called me - - -. Although there's a lot of them in the family called Heinrich in their first name, but they've always used their second name because it's easier I think.

Wasn't it in your father's family that a lot of them had the first name the same?

Yes.

Which was that? Was it Carl?

Carl. I think it was Carl.

Yes, about four of them called that.

Yes, that's right.

Do you know why that was so?

No, I wouldn't have a clue. See, I wouldn't know much background of my father and mother, you see. I wouldn't know too much of their background at all.

I'd like to ask you in a few minutes, not so much about their history, but whether they told you anything about it. So we'll move on to that just in a minute or so. Can you tell me the date of your birth?

My birth?

Yes.

Thirteenth of October 1898.

Where were you born?

On the homestead, Arden Vale. We often think about that, you know. In all our documents we, all of us, were born at Quorn, but we weren't born at Quorn, we were all born in the homestead. Had the midwife, used to come around them days you see. Eleven of us. None of us was born in the hospital.

Did you ever know the name of the midwife that your mother used?

No. No, I didn't.

You would have been about five years old when your youngest brother was born.

Yes.

Do you remember that occasion?

No.

I'd like to ask you about Arden Vale. I know there was a school house there. What other sorts of buildings?

There was only the school house, so that was all there was there. And our homestead was just opposite, across the road. Never used to have to take our lunch to school because we always used to go home for dinner.

Where would the nearest store have been?

Quorn. That'd be about nine miles them times.

Do you know if there was ever any talk of establishing more buildings?

No, never. Never any talk, you know, putting any more buildings up there.

I'd like to ask you a little bit about your father. His name was Ernst?

Ernst.

And from what we were talking about last week, he came from Germany when he was only three years old, with his family.

That's right.

Did he ever tell you why the family moved from Germany?

No, never.

Was he German in his manner and speaking?

Oh yes. Yes. He used to attend the Lutheran church regular at Quorn and before he come there they used to be down at Springton and then they went out to Hammond - the family shifted to Hammond. And from Hammond they shifted to Quorn, my father did. And then one of the brothers went over to the West Coast and the other one stopped on the homestead until he died .... And one went East. He stopped at Emu Downs. And the other one was up at Wyacca - that was further on from Quorn - and then they sold out and they went to live up Renmark way.

Did you see much of your uncles?

Oh yes. They used to visit one another pretty regularly. They used to come up there nearly every harvest. After the harvest was over they used to come round and visit one another.

Would the whole families go?

No, only the brothers - my uncles.

Would there have been occasions when you yourself would go to their homes?

No, not very often. I did go to my uncle's place one time out at Hammond. It was a dry season, and we used to get these big dust storms. And we were sitting outside about three o'clock and he looked over to the south and he said, 'Well, Alf,' he said, 'we'd better get inside because there's a big dust storm coming'. So he put all bits of rag underneath the doors and the windows to keep the dust from coming in, and when it had finished, 'Well,' he said, 'I think we'll go out and have a look. See what damage is done'. So he climbed out the window. I said, 'What are you going out the window for?' 'Well,' he said, 'you come out here and I'll show you.' And it was banked up about that high - - -

About a foot or eighteen inches

- - - on the door. He had to shovel it all away before he could get in.

How old were you at the time?

Oh, I'd have been about fifteen I suppose - sixteen.

Did you have storms like that at Arden Vale?

No. No, because we were more in the hills. Because over the hills a lot, they used to get it, on the Willochra Plains. Between our place and the Willochra Plains there was another big row of hills. We sort of lived in a valley, and that's where all the farming was - in this valley. There was the Flinders Ranges on one side and this [Mount] Ragless on the opposite side.

So you were much more sheltered than them.

Oh yes, we were sheltered. We would get the dust off the roads and that because there was no bituminous roads or anything like that. They'd powder up and you'd get it, but not like they used to out on the plain.

You've mentioned that your father's family moved about a bit when he was a boy, from one place to another. Did he tell you much about his childhood and his people settling the land?

No, he didn't say too much about that.

Were you children taught to speak German?

Yes. Then we went - - -. After we left the school at Arden Vale, we all come down to - - -. A lot of them come to Springton - German school down there - for Confirmation. And then I went to Emu Downs. The two youngest brothers, they was confirmed in the German church at Quorn.

Can you tell me why you went down to Emu Downs for confirmation?

Well there was really nowhere up at Quorn. The church only started that in the latter years. The same with all the Eckerts. All the Eckerts - they was our neighbours and they were cousins of mine - well, they all went down to Springton and Emu Downs and through there.

Can you tell me - I'm not familiar with that part of the Lutheran Church - what your Confirmation involved?

Well I can hardly remember that. (laughs) See now, I went down there and learnt to write and read German, and today I wouldn't understand a word of it. Got away from me you see, when the war broke out. We wasn't allowed to speak German in the town or anything like that, and eventually I forgot all about it.

Do you remember that time during the war?

Yes. The First War, yes.

Can you remember how that rule was put into effect, that you weren't to speak German?

Oh no. It was just, if they caught you talking German in the pubs or anything, a lot of the older ones, the police come round and tell them to talk English.

How did your parents feel about that?

Oh, they were pretty well English by that time.

Do you think there was resentment on their part?

Oh I don't think so, no.

Would you in your childhood have spoken German in the home?

Sometimes, not too often. Because most of the others - neighbours and all that - were all English, and line in with them, I suppose.

What sort of occasions would you have? Would it have been mealtimes?

Yes, mostly mealtimes, or sometimes out in the paddock Father would speak German to us, just to see that we could understand it them days. But now I wouldn't know nothing about it.

Were your church services affected during the First World War?

No.

Were they held in German or in English?

They were held in German to start off with, then afterwards they had to be held in English. And the Lutheran Church was at Quorn and Father used to go in there - and Mother. They used to go into there regular about once a fortnight. Used to have to drive in in a buggy and horse and take them about an hour to get in there. All the Sunday morning'd be gone by the time they got back.

Did you go in each time they went?

Oh no. No, we sort of didn't attend very regular as a family. Not in my time. I don't know about the eldest ones, whether they did or not.

Yes, because your oldest brother was about seventeen years older than you.

Yes, I suppose he would have been, wouldn't he?

Yes, so a big age range.

Yes.

Your mother was one of the Eckert family.

Yes.

Did she tell you anything of her family's background?

No. No, she hardly ever spoke about that.

Do you ever wish that they had told you more?

Yes, I suppose now I wish they would have, but at that time, well, it was a different world - them times.

Did they have anything about the house that told you about their background, such as pictures on the walls that had been brought from Germany?

No, I don't think there was hardly any pictures from Germany on the walls.

What about cooking and the food that you ate, was that influenced by the German background?

No. No, just the ordinary farm cooking. They used to make their own bread and scones and cakes. They had an oven built in the side of the house and it was bricks and you had to light a fire in there until it got to a certain temperature, and then you'd rake all the coals out and you'd push the bread in there till it was done. Give it a certain amount of time, and when it was done they'd pull it out with a scoop.

You had several older sisters than you. Did they help your mother with those sorts of things?

Oh yes. They helped very well.

Being that much older than you, were your older sisters involved in looking after the younger ones in the family?

Yes, oh yes. Yes, they was all very good to us.

Was there one sister in particular who helped with you?

No. About all the same I think.

Did your mother and father ever tell you how they came to meet?

No.

Were they both in Emu Downs?

At Emu Downs, yes.

I've mentioned that you were part of a large family. It was eleven?

Eleven in the family, yes.

And your second oldest brother died when he was just a boy.

Yes.

What were you told about that?

He got kicked with a horse. I don't remember him - I didn't see him at all. Kicked with a horse.

Was that while he was working on the farm?

Yes. I really don't know where it happened. Whether it was in the yard or in the paddock. There wasn't much said about it.

You've mentioned that you had cousins - the Eckerts - living about you. Would you have seen more of your mother's people than your father's?

No, about the same. You see Mother didn't have - - -. Well, she did have a brother lived next door to us, like, on the farm - the next farm to us. We used to see him pretty regular. He was about the only one.

How far away was his house?

About a mile. Because when they cut up the land in the valley, they cut it up in four hundred acre blocks, and each block was nearly a mile from one house to the other.

And your house fronted right on to the road. Was that the main road through the area?

Yes, that's the main road goes out to Warrens Gorge and up round Buckaringa Gorge - the main area.

Were the other houses in the valley fronted on to the road?

Yes, most of them. There was very few of them that was built back off the road.

So you would have known pretty much who was going by.

Oh yes, you could see them coming a mile away - dust. (laughs)

Did you know your mother's parents at all?

No. No, I didn't know them at all.

When you were down in Emu Downs - when doing your Confirmation studies - did you see older members of the family then?

No, not down there. My sister went to Springton - one of the elder sisters. Well I went to Emu Downs. Well there was no relations of mine at Emu Downs at all.

Who did you stay with when you went there?

Fred Schuppan.

How was he connected with your family?

He was no relation. Just a friend of Father's and Mother's, and that's where they sent me. I was there for about nine months I suppose.

So it was like a school, was it?

Yes. No, I was only stopping there, but I used to have to go to the Emu Downs school. That was about a mile away. We used to have to walk to the school.

I see, so you didn't miss your ordinary schooling during studying for the Confirmation?

No. No, well, you see, when I left home to go to school, the Arden Vale school had closed down because there was no children to go to the school. It closed down there for three or four years, and they couldn't get any teacher - nobody would board them.

Why do you think that was?

I don't know. People were too busy I suppose, on the farms. And a lot of them - - -. Well most of them boarded at our place because we was close and handy

to the school. And the others, well, they'd have had to find transport. The only transport that was available then was a horse and a buggy.

I'd like to talk with you about them later on. Could you tell me a little bit more about the farm at this stage? Did the farm have a name?

No. No, it didn't have a name.

You've said that it was four hundred acres. Can you tell me about what you produced on the farm?

Wheat. After they got it cleared. They had to clear the scrub all down - clean it all off before they could sew wheat. And then Father went and had a few sheep and cattle. They used to sell the cattle at the sale yards. And the sheep - well he'd shear the sheep and sell the wool. And he used to have eggs - they had fowls - and pigs running around the place. And that was our living. Butter - we'd milk a lot of cows. We used to milk sometimes up to about twelve or thirteen cows, and we had to before we went to school in the morning. We had to go and bring the cows in, milk them and turn them out in the paddock again. And the same thing used to happen of a night time.

What time would you get up in the morning?

Oh, we used to get up about seven o'clock. Of course we didn't have to do it every week. We had - I'd do it one week and the other brothers'd do it another week, and we all had our routine jobs to do. And there was never any squabbles about the job because it was your job and you had to do it.

Never? (laughs) What did your parents tell you about that time when they moved to Arden Vale? Was it all bushland?

Yes. Because they had to clear a patch of ground to put up a tent when they went there. And they lived in a tent until such time as they built a pine and pug - four rooms, small rooms they were. They'd get the pines and put them down, stand them up, one alongside the other, and then they'd fill in the gaps. Put a coating about that thick [five inches] of pine and pug. It was a mixture of straw and mud. And if you got a very wet winter of course - where the rain would come - it'd all wash away and Father used to have to replaster it again, until the new stone house was built. Because that was built in '83 or '93. It says something in the book there [Eckert family history] about when it was built new.

Well, they married in '80. So do you think they would've been living in the pine and pug house for ten years or so?

Yes, oh yes.

Was that house still standing when you were a boy?

Oh yes, that was our room. That was the boys' room then. You see, the four stone rooms - the girls had the bedroom, Father and Mother had a bedroom, then there was the front - what we used to call the parlour them days - and then there was the big dining room where we had our meals. And the kitchen was in the pine and pug place with the wooden stove and our bedrooms was out in one of the rooms out there in the pine and pug place. The wash house was, oh, only a little - tiny little place, you know. And there were no washing machines or anything like that. You had the scrubbing board. Then when we got the washing machines, we used to have to do the washing. Turn this old washing machine, you know - so many minutes to get the clothes clean. Different altogether to what it is now.

My word yes. What sort of water supply did the house have?

Well, we had to have the catchment from the ground, like - make a dam. There was no underground water. Well, there was underground water about a mile and a half away, in a spring under the bluff. That was running all the year round. That's where, when the water used to run out - run out of rain water for the place, and also for stock - we used to have to cart water for the stock that couldn't go over to the watering place.

Was the spring on your own property?

Yes. Of course now they've got the bores. The bores weren't thought of them days, but they've got a good water supply on the property now. They put a bore down there, about two hundred feet I think it was.

So during your childhood, were there times when you did run out of water?

Oh yes, plenty of times. Oh we used to have to cart water about - - -. Oh, it just depends how hot the weather was. And I think Father had two 400 gallon tanks - like, the square ones you know. And they used to go and fill them over at the springs. Sometimes they'd last a week, sometimes they wouldn't last a week.

We've been talking of various things about the house and the farm. What do you remember of the yield of the property in wheat? Was it considered good?

Oh, in a good season it was. But there was droughts there. Two or three years you wouldn't get nothing at all. We used to call it good wheat when we was - say we was reaping about eight bags to the acre. Oh, it was a wonderful crop. And now, they talk about twenty and thirty bags to the acre - otherwise it wouldn't pay them to run these big machines over. Of course we only had the

old horses and the old reaper. Had to winnow the wheat, bag it. And the bagger came out. Somebody patented a bagger - it would bag it as it winnowed it. In the early days it'd run on to a tarpaulin and you'd get down on your hands and knees and fill the bags that way.

Did you have to do that in your time?

Yes.

About how old were you when the bagger machine came along?

Oh, I reckon it must've been about nineteen hundred and eleven or twelve when they come out.

And was there somebody in Quorn who contracted that sort of work?

No, I think they got it from down Adelaide somewhere. Someone got this patent going.

So did the farm buy its own machine?

Oh yes, you had to buy your own machines.

Were there any people apart from family members who did the work on the farm?

No. No, we never ever employed anybody. Not in my time. Unless it happened before my time. Otherwise we always managed to scrape along. Well, there was no money about. See, what we used to do - I remember, we used to take the eggs and butter into the store once a week. And perhaps if we killed a beast or something, we might take some of the meat in there - sell it in Quorn - and the eggs and butter would go to the store. But you wouldn't get any money - you'd take it out in groceries. About every three month, or four month, they'd have a settle up - see how we were going. Who owed this and who owed that. There was no money about.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE A: TAPE 1 SIDE B

Well I'd like to talk a little bit more about what was on the farm. You've mentioned that you'd be milking eleven or a dozen cows. Did you keep a bull on the farm?

Yes. Father would also cart wood into the town [Quorn] - like, to supply the town in wood. He'd take a load of wood in, say about two ton at a time, on the wagon - had four horses - and he'd get about thirty shillings for the whole load. (laughs) Instead of getting the thirty shillings all in one, he'd go in, like, today and they could afford five shillings off it, and five shillings the next time. So the town people was nearly as bad as being out on the land, in them days.

So do you remember pretty hard times all during your childhood?

Yes.

Was there ever any talk of the family moving?

No. No, never. Never any talk of moving.

How many horses would your family keep on the farm?

We had twenty working horses. And then, of course, Father would rear his own. Every year he'd get two foals, you see, and that used to keep us going - keep the stock - keep it up.

Did he breed only from his own horses or bring in new blood from neighbours and the like?

No, our own horse. Of course they used to come around the district to look for stallions nearly every year from different areas. They weren't like brothers or sisters or anything like that, the horses - they were all different strains you see. Sometimes they might be there for a couple of years and then there's be a fresh one come into the district, and they'd go from house to house, or from farm to farm.

Did your father keep a stallion himself?

No, never.

Did the family do the horse breaking themselves?

Yes, oh yes. Father used to do that himself. Used to take a fair while.

Were they all broken to harness?

Yes, all broken into harness.

So would all of these twenty horses be the medium draught?

We had some heavier draughts and some light ones as well. But I think the heavy draughts - - -. The light draughts would have done the work as easy as the heavy draughts because they had big legs and they used to get very tired by knock off time.

What was the most number of horses that you'd be using in one team at a time?

Eight.

What was that for?

Ploughing or cultivating the ground - getting it ready for seed.

What sort of a plough were you using?

Well, we had from one single furrow plough and up to a seven furrow plough. And we used to always work it out that if you had a one single furrow plough, you'd put two horse to each furrow. If you had a four furrow plough you'd use eight horses. Just depends. If you was fallowing - what we used to call fallowing - you'd plough very deep. And then of course through the years you'd only scrape the top with a scarifier. Well, then, you wouldn't use so many horses. You'd have a bigger implement behind you.

You were telling me last week about when your father got interested in a tractor. Can you tell me about that again?

Yes. Well, this chap was coming around selling these Fordson tractors. They were all [steel] tyre - wasn't rubber tyre like they are now. So Father said, 'Yes,' he said, 'I'll buy one from you', and he said, 'providing that we can go out and try it out first'. He said, 'Oh yes'. So our land was pretty hilly, you see, lot of bends and stony country, and he got half way up one hill and the thing stopped. The chap got out and had a look, and 'Oh,' he said, 'you're ploughing very deep'. He said, 'That's the depth we plough here', and he said, 'I've never had to pull a plough out of any shallower, all the years that I was working here with horses'. He said, 'You can take your tractor and go'. (laughs) So he stuck to the horses.

About what year would the tractor have visited?

Oh, I reckon it'd be about - - -. It was just after the war I think it was.

Did any of your neighbours go to tractors at that time?

Not at that time, but later on they did. The Eckerts got a tractor. They got a tractor, but, oh, they had more bother when they had a tractor than a horse team, and I think the horse team done more than the tractors. Because the tractor used to break down and there was nobody knew much about them, and they used to have to send to Adelaide for parts and the tractor would be laying idle there for about a fortnight before you got any parts from Adelaide. And if you had the old horse, if you broke something, well you could get a bit of cocky wire, we used to say, and you'd fix it up and away you'd go.

Did any of you younger lads in the family wish that your father would change to more modern methods?

No. No, we were quite happy to carry on like that.

You've mentioned that he was carting wood into Quorn. So, was he still clearing land?

Oh yes, clearing land. They were still clearing land when I left the farm in 1921 - still clearing a bit of land. They had one big block - oh, it must've been about twenty acres. My brother-in-law - the one that married Gus [Augusta], they had bullocks them days, and they come and logged all the scrub down. They had a big chain about twenty yards wide, and they had one team of bullocks on that side and one this side, you see, and he'd go through and knock it down. Then, of course, we had to come in behind with an axe and cut it up and either burn it or - - -. If you couldn't sell it in the town, you had to either burn it or store it.

I guess you stored it if possible.

Oh yes. But there was wood everywhere in them days.

Yes, you've mentioned that the place was pretty hilly and rocky, so would there have been little areas of scrub about the place that you couldn't clear effectively?

Yes. Well they were mostly - - -. Anything that was anything like a rock area or anything like that, Father used to leave it for shelter for the stock in the summer time and in the winter time, which they don't do now. Since I left and the younger brothers took it over, they cleared all them patches, you know, and the paddocks are as bare from one end to the other. That's not right. You should have shelter for your stock. That was one think I'll say about Father, he liked to look after his stock.

About what percentage of the farm in your day was carrying wheat or carrying stock?

Oh, I suppose about something like two thirds of it.

Was with the wheat?

Wheat and stock. We used to sow about - - -. We used to fallow about 150 acres a year - like, plough it up and work it all through the summer, and you'd put it in next year. And summer you'd re-sow again two years straight. Well, that wasn't so good. You had to give it a spell. Because they didn't have the fertiliser they put in the ground them days, that they've got now.

So was the 150 acres the total acreage that you put in wheat each year?

No, we generally put in about 200-odd acres, and the rest was for Father to run the cattle on. And of course my father bought two other farms beside that. They couldn't make a living on it, and so he bought them out and when I left home there was three - he bought three farms.

And were these 400 acres each as well?

Yes. They cut them all up into 400 acre blocks when the Government cut the area up, which wasn't enough. Not to rear a family on.

No, not a family of ten or eleven, that's for sure. And with these two other farms in the family, was it still just family members working on them?

Yes. Yes, we used to work the three farms. When I was home, we used to work the three farms, you see. But they were all joined one on to the other. They were neighbours that he'd bought out, you see. I suppose he got a loan from the Government or something. I don't know how they made a living, I'm sure - it was tough times.

Having the extra acreage, when he bought the neighbouring farms, was he able to leave the land fallow longer and improve the crop at all?

No. No, I don't think it improved it much. You fallowed it one year, put it in every other year, you'd get a better crop than if you put it in every year. Of course now, they've got that much fertiliser they put into the ground that they can practically get a crop off it every year. But in the long run they wouldn't be any better off because the fertiliser's such a big price.

Were you putting down the superphosphate?

Yes. We used to use five ton a year.

Where would you get that from?

Oh, used to come from Wallaroo. The agent in Quorn, they used to sell it to you, and you'd cart it out in the wagon and .... go fetch it out on to the farm and mix it in with the drills - hand drill. One part of it was for the wheat, another part was for the super. And you'd use so much wheat and so much super per acre.

Did you run cattle for beef as well as milk?

Not too much, only just for our own use. See, if you killed a beast, them days, well, it was too much for you. We had no fridges or anything to do, so anyhow, we'd kill perhaps one. Then the neighbour - you'd give half to a neighbour - a quarter to two or three neighbours - and they'd do the same when they killed. That's how we lived. We'd help one another. And if you offered to pay them, well that was a big insult. They wouldn't - - -. Oh, my God. (laughs)

How many sheep did you run?

Oh, we never used to run many sheep. We'd only run about 150 at the most, I think, because we used to have to yard them every night. Like, that they didn't - wild dogs.

You mean dingos?

Dingos.

Were there a lot of them around?

Oh, there was a fair few about. And the foxes come down to finish up with. Of course they'd get the lambs. They'd bite their tongue out.

What did you do about the dingos? Would you go out shooting them?

Oh yes, you'd go out and shoot them or set baits, or build high fences to keep them back. That was pretty expensive them days.

So did you yard the sheep pretty near the house?

Yes. Oh yes, you'd have to bring them in near the house.

That must have been quite a deal of trouble then, raising the sheep?

Oh yes, raising the sheep.

Did the family keep doing that all during your childhood?

Yes, practically right through.

Were you involved in shearing?

No, I never sheared a sheep. When I worked for my brother-in-law I used be tar boy - what they called tar boy. You were shearing with the blades, you see, in them times - they didn't have the clippers - and they'd perhaps cut a piece of skin that big [one inch nick] off a sheep, and they'd sing out, 'Tar'. Of course you had to have some Stockholm tar and you'd dab this tar on it. And I also used to have to keep the floor swept, you see.

Was it called Stockhom tar, as in the city?

Stockholm tar, yes.

So who did the shearing on your family farm?

My father done most of it.

Now your father lived to quite a good age, didn't he?

Yes, he was nearly ninety.

Was he a robust man?

Yes, oh yes.

Was he still working the farm as well as ever when you left?

Yes, in 1921 - oh yes. My mother died in '26 and I left Quorn in 1921, and he was still pretty active.

What sort of a man was he?

What do you men - tall?

Perhaps what sort of character was he?

Oh, he was pretty dubious.

What do you mean by that?

Oh, you know, he'd go to the town, perhaps have a few beers and that. Of course there was nothing else to do for them. But I've never seen him under the influence of liquor. Oh no, we were a happy family. I was only thinking the other night, you know - there was eleven of us - I don't think I ever seen Father raise his hand to one of us. He'd tell us to do a job and that job was done. He'd never have to tell us a second time.

We were talking before while your son was here about you taking the pledge at school, and you've mentioned that your father did drink. Were there restrictions on your behaviour that your parents set down? Things that you weren't allowed to do?

No. No, none of us drank - not in my time - very few. In fact I don't think I had a glass of beer till I was - might have been eighteen or nineteen before ever I knew what alcohol was. Because my brother-in-law - I worked with him for four years - and of course he was a strict teetotaller. And a funny thing, he had a shepherd used to mind the sheep - he had a lot of sheep he did - and the shepherd, he used to like his drop of ale. And my brother-in-law's house was about a mile, or half a mile, back off the road, and the neighbours, they used to bring some bottles of stuff and hide it in the tree down by the road-side. And he'd walk down there every night and so my brother-in-law followed him one night, just for fun, you know, and he found out where he used to go to. (laughs) Of course he let him carry on. Oh he wasn't a bad - only had one arm - and he'd swing an axe with the best of them.

This is the shepherd?

The shepherd, yes.

And were the neighbours buying the stuff for him?

Yes, they would buy it and bring it - oh, about once a fortnight they might bring a flagon and put it down under the tree. Well, a flagon wasn't much, was it? You wouldn't have to drink too much to make that last you a fortnight.

Did you, back on the family farm, have to have someone stay with the sheep during the day time?

No. No, we used to put them in the paddock. If we put them in the scrubby country, well we used to have to stop with them. But in the open paddocks where you could practically see them all the time, well we never used to worry about dogs.

Would the dingos attack them during the day?

Very seldom. It was mostly of a night time. That's when they used to do their damage.

And even when you had them penned, would they come in close to the house?

Oh yes, they'd come in round the yards. Of course they couldn't get in. They never got any of them.

You'd mentioned that you had pigs, and I guess you'd slaughter them occasionally?

Yes, occasionally.

Did you smoke that meat?

Yes. Father had a little smoke house. He used to light this bucket of stuff and put all the chips in it and smoke them and hang this. Oh it was beautiful. Smoked ham for nearly twelve month.

Did you sell any of the pork?

Sometimes. If it was a very big pig you used to have to do that because of the time. Mother used to make our own sausages you see, and by the time we cut a ham off, one .... and smoked a few hams, well there wasn't much left when you had a big family to feed.

What sort of poultry did you keep?

Fowls - only fowls. Because there wasn't much water about for ducks or anything like that. We used to have fowls.

Would you have to take them in of a night time?

No. Oh no, they used to roost up in the trees.

With the dingos about, you said that you had to lay baits for them. Did you ever have problems with the farm dogs getting mixed up with them?

No. No, I think when they used to lay the baits, I think they used to tie the dogs up, you see, of a night time, and then they'd go and pick the baits up in the day time.

Would you ever have a farm dog run with the dingos, or go bad in that way?

No. No, we didn't. Some of the neighbours might have, but there wasn't too many that used to keep sheep along there. There was only Father and my brother-in-law, and I think a couple of other neighbours, they used to just have about half a dozen of them just to keep them in their mutton supply. They'd kill one every now and again.

Why do you think your father persevered with a large flock of sheep?

Oh, I don't know. I suppose he just thought he'd be better than somebody else or something. He had the country there. When they used to sell wethers at sixty shillings a head, he thought he was getting a big price. You would't buy an ear for that now would you?

No. Was the family able to grow their own feed on the farm?

In a good year, yes. Not in bad years. Well, of course nothing was growing either without any rain.

Would you have to buy it and cart it in then?

Yes, although Father was a great one - - -. If he had a good year - what they used to call the cocky chaff years ago, they wouldn't know what it was now - - -. See you used to reap the wheat and then you'd have to put it through the winnower and separate the chaff from the grain, and that chaff was heaped up in the end of a paddock and it was kept sometimes for three or four years. And that's how - every year there was a haystack built, or an extra haystack for hay, straw - and that used to keep us going. Some years he'd have, say, two or three years of fodder supply on hand. Well they all had to do it, right through the area.

So you didn't have to bring in feed?

No, very seldom. In fact, you had a job to get it, unless you paid a terrible price for it.

Yes. Well, I guess if you were having bad times there'd be bad times all over.

Oh yes, bad times all over. A lot of our - when they did used to buy chaff - used to come all the way from Gladstone.

We've mentioned what a large family you were. But some of your brothers and sisters were quite a deal older than you. How big would the household have been while you were a boy? Were your older brothers still living at home?

Yes. See, there was the - - -. When we got the extra four rooms, you see, there used to be like eight rooms you see. There was the boys' room and the

girls' room, and then we had the cellar. Father had a cellar. Everybody had a cellar. And on top of this cellar there was another room built on top of that, and that was also used as a bedroom.

Was that part of the stone house?

Yes, just off the stone house.

How many of you boys were in the room that you lived in?

Oh, there used to be about four of us sometimes in the one room.

Did you share a bed?

Yes.

Were you all in one bed?

No. A couple of double beds - sometimes single beds there. On top of the cellar there was only room for two single beds up there, see.

Who slept up there?

The eldest brothers used to sleep up there. In fact I slept there the last couple of years when I was home. Because you see the other brother, he - one got killed in the war and the other one had the farm. And Jack - that's the one that went to war and he come back - well he shifted to Gawler on a block. From there on he went to Murray Bridge. So when I left there was only - - -. After I come back from my brother-in-law, there was only just the two of us - two boys - younger than myself.

Why I really went to my sister's place to stop, my brother-in-law had land over on the West Coast, and after harvest he used to go over every year and clear a bit of ground. So I was working for my uncle at Hammond, and my father come out there one Sunday and he said, 'Oh,' he said - my uncle said, 'I don't think I want Alf any more.' He said, 'Looks like a dry season. It's no good us putting in any wheat. You can take him home if you like'. So, anyhow, I went home with Father. About a week after, my sister come down and said to Mum, she said, 'What's Alf doing?' 'Oh, nothing much, why?' She said, 'I wonder would he come and stop with me?' She was on her own, you see, while her husband - brother-in-law - was away on the West Coast clearing land. And she said, 'Yes,' she said. 'It'll be something for him to do, anyway.' I finished up by stopping there four and a half years. (laughs)

So about how old were you when you went there?

That was in nineteen hundred and eleven I went there. I would have been thirteen.

So your father was able to manage his land without you?

Yes. The other boys - see, I had two other brothers elder than me. They managed the farm then. And of course when the war broke out, well, Jack, he was the first one to go to the war and Ted was the second one to go. He went. Well, that only left the two younger brothers home, so I had to come away from my brother-in-law's place and we worked the farm between us. I was lumping bags of wheat when I was - that was in 1915 I think it was. I was lumping bags of wheat, handling ten horse teams and all that sort of business. Still, I'd do it again.

Would you?

Yes.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE B: TAPE 2 SIDE A

It's a sad story, I'm going to tell you.

Yes, this is what your son asked you?

No, some of the people, you know, sometimes say, 'Do you remember what the worst thing you ever done when you was on the farm?' I said, 'Yes, I'll tell you a story'. I was working for my brother-in-law and I used to go home every Sunday - every Saturday night - you see, and I'd stop overnight. I'd come back Sunday night - Sunday evening - on an old pushbike, on the dirt road. There was no lights or anything - we never had any lanterns or anything. Anyhow, that's not part of the story. We sat down to breakfast on the Sunday morning - had a big long table - and Father always used to - - -. We all used to have to wait until Father come, because he always said Grace, and especially on Sunday.

And about half way through breakfast time he got up and he went outside, and Mother said, 'What's wrong with Father?' I said 'I don't know'. So anyhow, he went out in the shed - this was in the big drought, big drought in about 1912 or '13 - and he come back and he had a rifle in his hand and two bullets. And we looked at him and he looked at me and he said, 'Well, Alf,' he said, 'I've got a job for you to do,' he said. He said, 'Will you do it for me?' He said, 'None of the others will do it - I've asked'. He had an old horse. He'd do anything for him. He'd put him in the dray and he'd be down the other end of the paddock and he'd only whistle and he'd come up to him. He'd follow him everywhere. And he said, 'He's getting old. We've got no feed. We can't buy

any feed for him'. He said, 'I want somebody to shoot him'. He said, 'Will you take him and shoot him for me?'

So anyhow, I - - -. He said, 'Now, I've given you two bullets.' He said, 'I want you to give him two of them, to make sure that he doesn't suffer.' So he told me where to take him, underneath a tree where he always used to find him. And I shot him, and I buried him - I didn't bury him but there was a big tree, and I broke all the branches off the tree and I covered him up, you see, to keep the birds off as much as I could. And I cried all the way back, I tell you.

Anyhow, the following week I went back there and it had all dried up - the branches - and I set fire to him and I buried him. I quite often think of that you know. Yes, he said, 'I've asked the other brothers to shoot him but they couldn't, and,' he said, 'I can't. And I don't want to get any poorer than he is because he'd get down and he'd have to die of starvation'. It was a sad morning for me.*

Yes. I guess you saw a lot of death on the farm during drought time.

Oh yes. Yes, the cattle'd get down, you know. They'd be that poor they wouldn't be able to get up and you'd have to shoot them and just let them lay there. You'd skin them sometimes. You'd skin them and then sell the skins. No, it was a bit of a rough life, but still, we enjoyed it. Didn't have any squabbles.

You've mentioned that foxes came into the district, in later years, was it?

Yes.

What about rabbits?

Oh, they were there years.

Were they a problem in your area?

* After the end of the tape recorded interview, AK spoke further about the farm horses. AK's father's team of horses (such as the one seen in the wheat carting photograph on file) were 'the best in the district' and were entered in local shows and won first prizes.

His father was very careful with his horses. They never suffered from sore shoulders, unlike other teams that AK saw with bleeding shoulders caused by badly fitting harnesses. Such teams would be stopped and examined by the local police.

On the Klingberg farm each young horse being broken in was carefully measured for a new harness which was made in Quorn. The night before the harness was to be first used the collar would be soaked in water so that the next day it would better mould its shape to that of the horse. AK and his brothers were sternly reprimanded if they put the wrong collar on a horse.

Yes, oh yes. What we used to do - as soon as it got dry in the summer time there'd be thousands of them in the hills, you see - and we used to have a water hole or a dam with water in it, you see. We'd put a wire netting fence around the water and we'd have a little inlet where they could get in, and they'd go through a tunnel to get in. And of course, when a rabbit tries to get out he always follows the fence around, you see, and he'd jump over the top of this tunnel and they'd never find their way out. And we'd have to go down in the morning and kill them all. Well sometimes we knocked over as many as 150 rabbits there one morning. You wouldn't see much of them in the day time because they'd be sheltering. And they'd come for miles. They could smell the water for some reason or other, and we had to destroy them.

Did you have to fence off the spring so that animals you didn't want to drink from it couldn't get to it?

No.

Because I guess that would have been handy to anything living in the area.

Oh yes.

So you say that they'd jump over the tunnel. So the tunnel was jutting out from the - - -?

About that far from the - - -.

And they'd just go over it.

Just go over it. You see, they wouldn't think of - - -. And when they followed it from the outside, it sort of made a little bit of a V shape and they'd come in. Of course we weren't the only ones that were doing it - everybody else was doing it. They had to, otherwise they would've been eaten out of house and home.

What about mice? Did you have any trouble with them?

A mice plague one year. They were everywhere. They'd get into the bed clothing and they'd climb up the ceiling. You'd go to feed the horses - you know, you'd mix the feed up. The mice'd be crawling up your arms, and then you'd just wipe them off and think nothing of them. And they went as quick as they come. They seemed to have come overnight and in a week's time they were all gone. I don't know where they went to.

Would that have been harvest time?

Oh no. Mostly harvest time, and the haystacks. Oh they'd get into the haystacks and they'd ruin all the hay, you see. They'd eat the heads off it. Everybody used to put galvanised iron around their hay yards - they'd still get in.

So would you put the iron on every year, just as a precaution?

Yes, well of course the iron was up and then you wouldn't take it down from one year's end to the other.

Yes, you certainly had a lot to cope with. What was the attitude to the big birds of prey at that time - the Wedgetail Eagle and the like, that you'd get up there? Did you consider them to be a pest?

No. No, they weren't too bad there then. There was plenty of wild life for them, that we wasn't troubled with them very much.

Did you have many kangaroos or emus on the property?

No. No, very few. They tell me they're terrible up there now. See they've come down from the north. There used to be plenty up north, but of course they've come down through the bad seasons up there, and they've taken over some of the properties up there now I believe.

I guess you would have gone out hunting as a boy.

Oh yes.

What sort of thing would you be after?

Oh, only rabbits or kangaroos or anything like that - just for an outing.

Did you use the rabbits for meat?

Oh yes, mostly, the good ones. As long as they weren't bruised too much. Oh yes, rabbit pie was all right now and again.

Did you set traps on a regular basis for food - for the rabbits?

For the rabbits? Oh, we used to set a few traps, but you could catch enough without setting traps.

What about parrot pie? Was that a local dish?

We used to have a few but not many. Plenty of parrots there. Father used to have a bit of a vineyard there - he had twenty grapevines near the house. And the canaries - not the canaries - the parrots used to come there of a morning and he knocked over one or two of them, but there's nothing much on a parrot when you do pluck him.

You've mentioned the vineyard. What other sorts of trees were you growing?

You have your apricots and peaches. He was very fond of gardening.

So did you have a big vegetable garden?

Yes. Mother always used to look after the vegetable garden. She used to grow all her own vegetables - cabbages and carrots and parsnips, and anything like that, she never - - -. Because we had a nice dam down the bottom and there'd be a fence for the roadside, and a good catchment, and it was very seldom that we were out of dam water. Only in the very bad droughts. Of course there was nothing then and nobody had any water then. They all had to cart water.

How would you be watering the vegetables and fruit trees? Did you pump the water in any way?

Pump. Had a pump on the side of the dam with a little platform out to the centre of the dam. Well you put the pump down, then you'd pump the water.

So it was a manual pump?

Yes. Oh yes. Of course now they've got all electric powered - wouldn't be manual now.

I'd like to talk some more about your childhood. You've mentioned that all of you children had regular chores to do. Let's talk about the days when you were still at school. What sort of work would you be doing around the house and farm on a regular basis?

[queries question]

What sort of chores?

I'd be doing?

Yes.

Well we'd get the cows - we'd have to milk the cows - and you'd have to feed the pigs and the fowls, chop the wood and all that sort of business, you see. And by that time it was time to go to bed. (laughs)

Yes, you said you got up at about seven o'clock to do the cows. You said you took it in turns one week to the next, or was it each day that you took in turns?

Oh no, we'd have weekly - had every week.

So you'd have a good break from it.

Oh yes. And there was no arguments to say that, 'Oh, I done it last week,' and all this sort of business. You just went and done it and that'd be the end of it.

Were any of you boys expected to help with any of the household chores?

No, very few. Because there - let's see, there were two sisters there, well there was one. Yes, she only got married just a few years before I left the farm. And I think Mother employed a girl there for a while, just after I left, till she died. She had somebody to do the housework.

This'd be after 1921?

Yes. Oh, back before - 1918 and '19 I think. As I know, my wife, she worked out there for a while, you see.

Was this before you married?

Before we was married, yes.

Is that when you met her or had you known her before?

Oh, I'd known her before.

Did she live at your farm while she was doing this work?

Yes, oh yes.

Were you two keeping company at that time?

No, not to start off with, but of course as the time went on, we got to know one another better and that's the way things go. Oh, and we used to have good entertainment of a Saturday night. We'd either be - about twenty or thirty of us - we'd go to each - - -. Might go to our place this Saturday night. Next Saturday night we'd go to one of the other neighbours. And they had the old piano accordion, you know, and they'd play that, and they'd have a few dances and play a few games, have cups of tea and cake, and go home quite contented.

As you say the houses were about a mile apart, so there'd be a good deal of travelling for your Saturday night entertainment.

Oh yes. Still we all had horses - horse back.

Would you as a young man go into Quorn?

We used to go in about once a fortnight. There used to be about six or eight of us. We all had our own horses, and we'd ride in on horse back. We used to go in Saturday nights mostly - just have a look round.

Were there dances or would you go to the hotel?

No. No, wouldn't go to hotels or anything like that. They were a pretty good crowd in there, you know, through their - - -. There was hardly anybody used to worry much. And at these dances on the weekend, there was never a bottle of beer or anything there at all. Went out there just to enjoy yourself. Some nights we'd - through the week - perhaps every month or five or six weeks, we used to ride over to Willochra Plains to somebody's house over there. There might be a concert over there in the school. We'd ride all over the hills - top of the hill - to go to this concert and come back. Oh, we had plenty to do.

You've lent me that photograph of you and a brother and some of your cousins out on a Sunday picnic.

Yes.

Would that be a common outing?

Oh no, we just wanted somewhere to go this afternoon so we thought we'd take a run out there.

You've mentioned the sorts of chores that you did as a boy. At what age did you start working out, say in the yards or in the paddocks, doing farm work?

I left school about nineteen hundred and ten - when I finished schooling - because the school closed down. And then of course you'd go out and bring the cows in and all that sort of business before, when we used to go to school. You just carried on the same. When I went to work for my brother-in-law, that's when I first started to handle the team of horses out in the paddocks. From about nineteen hundred and - oh, '12 and '13 I think it was.

Before that, on the family farm, had you helped as a boy with things like bagging the wheat?

Oh yes.

What other sorts of things would you have helped with as a young boy, with the farm work?

Oh, you'd be picking stones off the property and loading them in the dray, and helping father in general.

Would you be helping harness the horses?

Oh yes.

What about looking after the harness, whose job was that?

Well, we used to look after it regularly, about every twelve months. Everybody could have a go at that.

Did your mother do any work outside of the home on the farm?

Not in the latter years. But of course when she first went there, well she had to go out with the axe and grubber and chop trees down and everything.

Did she?

Yes. I don't know whether you noticed in that book there when my first brother was born and people in the Klingberg reunion, and some of them read it and they used to come to me and they'd say, 'My word, your parents must have been cruel'. I said, 'Why?' They said, 'You say in there that you had to tie

Bill to a tree with a rope'. I said, 'Yes,' that was right. They said, 'Why was that?' 'Well,' I said, 'because Mother used to have to go and help Father chop down trees and clear the ground, and there was no fences round the place, and there was blacks everywhere. That's the only way they could hold him. See, he was liable to wander away and get lost. Same as they do now.' Of course they looked at it in a different way then, when I told them what it was for.

Yes, that'd be pretty hard work.

Oh yes. But, oh, the blacks was good up there then. There was, oh, I suppose a couple of hundred around there, running around the hills.

This was in your day?

In our day, yes - in my day - and they used to have camps there. They'd come around about every weekend. Some of them would come and they'd knock on the door and peep inside, and Mother would give them a loaf of bread or a piece of meat or something, and perhaps a dozen eggs, and they'd go away quite happy, and never do any damage. They were the original - old original blacks. In fact they used to help you if they could.

In what sort of way?

Oh, you know, look after stock or anything like that. If they seen some stray cattle around they'd let you know, and all this sort of business. And I often think - I was only saying to Ted [son] the other day - since this has started. Blacks used to camp - big camps, just under the old bluff. Well Father owned the ground and we used to plough the ground where this blacks' camp was, and many a time you'd go round and you'd plough up bones and all that, and you wouldn't have taken a bit of notice. And you'd plough up some tools they used to use - axes and all that - that they used to make out of stone. Never meant anything to us. But these days they'd be worth thousands of dollars. But of course it's too late now, they're all broken up.

Were the Aborigines in your area still living a fairly traditional life when you were a boy?

Oh yes.

Did they work on local farms at all?

Oh no, no. They just kept helping themselves. They'd live on their own.

When you were a child, were you warned to keep away from them or anything like that?

No. They seemed to just work in with you. There was plenty of them about. As I say, they was the dinky-di. They'd never do you any harm. Well they didn't us, anyhow.

Were there other people about? I'm thinking for instance about the Afghan folk who were in some areas in northern South Australia. Did you have any of them?

There used to be two Afghans used to come around - oh, about every six month - with a swag on their back, you know, and trying to sell you little odds and ends. They used to always camp at our place of a night - make it their home. Father used to let them sleep out in the wheat shed. They'd go away next day. Buy some eggs off Mum and they'd cook these eggs in the frying pan, and make these johnny cakes. And then you'd see them flip them up in the pan, you know - they didn't have anything to turn them over, and they'd flip.

Did you find them entertaining?

Oh yes, they were ..... .

As you say, there were both English and German folk living in the area. Were there other nationalities as well?

No. No, not in that area. There could've been ten miles away or something like that, because as I say, ten miles was a long distance them days without a horse, and you didn't know what was going on the other side - over the hill.

What means did you have of finding out what was going on? Did you take a newspaper at all?

No, no newspapers. Unless you went into town and bought one. Nothing like that brought out round the area.

Do you think you kept up with what was going on?

Oh yes, kept up. See when Father used to go to town he used to get a bit of news and spread it out. The neighbours'd go in perhaps through the week and hear some news. You sort of lived on your own, as I say, in the whole district. You knew what was going on in the district and the neighbour because in them times if your neighbour was working in that paddock there and you was working in this paddock, well, you'd go and have a chat. No matter what the work was, you'd go and have a mag for about half an hour. And now they've got all these big machines, they haven't even got time to say 'Good day' to you. The same if you passed anybody on the road. Say, like on horse back, or a bike, in a trap. Oh, they'd pull off the side of the road and you'd have a mag. It's a different life altogether to what it is now.

Different pace as well?

Oh yes, different pace. But we got there. Just - it was just a living. As I say, it was just an existence.

You were suggesting, I think, last week, that your father wouldn't have had the money to keep up with some of the technological changes that were going on. Perhaps not able to afford the more modern equipment that was coming through.

Oh no. You'd get a machine and you'd work until it was worn out. Now you get a machine today and they build another model next year or a couple of years after. The one they'd been using was quite in good order, but no, they've got to have the latest one to come out. Working for years to pay for it.

Did your family ever get a car in the time you were working there?

No. The only thing I had - I used to ride the motorbike. An old two-stroke Indian motorbike, I bought from Paul Hannemann. I think I might have been about sixteen or seventeen at that time. Didn't have a kick starter or anything. You used to have to run along with it, you see, until you got speed enough to start it, and then you'd have to jump on it while it was going. And it had a carrier on the back and if somebody wanted to come with you, they'd have to jump on while the machine was going, while you was just going along quietly.

Had you got that about the time you were working for your brother-in-law?

No, that was after - just after.

You say you got it from Paul Hannemann. Was he someone local or in Quorn?

No, he was local. He was a brother to my brother-in-law. It was too small for him - it was only a two-stroke you see - and he wanted a bigger one because it was fairly hilly country where he lived and he had a long way to go. And he used to get about a fair bit on the old motorbike and he sold it to me and he got this bigger one.

Did you find it made a difference to how far afield you went once you had a motorbike?

Oh yes. In fact the three of us - because three of us had one there just before I left. There was myself and my brother had one, and Ossie Eckert - he was like my cousin - he had one. And we used to do trips of a Sunday which we thought was a terrible trip. We'd go from Quorn to Port Augusta, Port Augusta over to Wilmington, Wilmington back to Quorn. That would be about - the whole trip would only take in about forty miles I suppose. Oh, that was a terrible big day's journey. (laughs) That's the only motor vehicle that I've ever

driven. I've never driven a car. I tell people and they won't believe me, and I say, 'That's right'. And they say, 'How did you manage when you first joined the Railways?' 'Well,' I said, 'they had the trains then'.

And then when you came to Adelaide you lived very close to where you worked, didn't you?

Oh yes.

Before you got the motorbike, how far afield would you travel in a day then?

By horse? Oh, you'd go about ten mile there and ten mile back, or fifteen mile there and back. I used to go to the Wilmington Show once a year. I had a sister living in Quorn. Well, I'd go to Quorn. Like I say, if the Show was on Saturday, I'd go to Quorn on the Friday night, stop with her, and then we'd go to Wilmington and back with the horse and sulky, and stop with her on the way back again. Because it was too far for the horse.

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE A: TAPE 2 SIDE B

But when New Year's Eve come, we always used to get up to tricks with a New Year's Eve. We'd either take a gate off of somebody's place, put it on somewhere else, and they'd get up in the morning and their gate was - there was a gate there but it wasn't theirs. So, anyhow, this New Year's Eve, there was about six or eight of us went into the town on horse back, and we stopped there till about half past ten. And things was quiet. So, we had our horses stabled into one of the hotel's yards. So, anyhow, we thought we'd go home. So we went up the main street, crossed the railway yard line and the Quorn Creek. I don't know if you've ever been up that way.

The Quorn Creek? Yes.

Well, we went out Arden Vale / Warrens Gorge, you see - we all lived that way. So when we got to the creek, my youngest brother said to me, 'What about we go down - - -?' - they used to have a bridge over the creek down further - a footbridge for people to cross when it was raining you see, in the floods - 'we go down and block the bridge up?' So there was a saleyard not very far from there, and there was all sorts of implements there. So we pulled all those implements down and we blocked the bridge up on both sides and nobody could get through. Never done any damage to the bridge or anything. So we went down to get our horses. All of a sudden a whistle blew. I said, 'hello'. There was some bamboos not very far from this bridge - the policeman was hiding in there. He said, 'Come back here,' he said, 'you lads,' he said. He said, 'You've had your fun - I'm going to have mine now'. He said, 'You take all

those implements back where they come from,' he said, 'and that'll be the end of it. But,' he said, if you don't,' he said, 'you'll go down in the book'. He said, 'I know all your names,' he said, 'I've been watching you all night. And I thought, now they're going to get up to some trouble before the night is out.' (laughs) We never done any damage, put all the implements back and we rode home quite contented. Thought it was a great night out.

Do you think there was a different attitude to other people's property in those times? That you had more respect for other people's property?

Oh yes. You'd never do any damage. Same if you moved a gate or anything like that, you'd never do any damage. Never any damage done. And we used to go - - -. Some of these dances we used to go. There was one old chap there, he always used to come to the dance. He was a bachelor and he used to come to a dance with a horse and a sulky you see. So, anyhow, we went down there one night and we took the horse out of the sulky, pushed the gate across, pushed the shafts through, coupled the horse on the other side of the gate. Oh no, we had our fun.

I think that was a traditional prank. I've heard that one a couple of other times.

Yes. But they didn't do the damage they do now. Now they've got to smash things - nothing like that now.

Did you, as a boy, ever go away from the farm for holidays?

Well we used to come down here to town, I think, about once in two years. There was about four or five of us - different neighbours, you see - three or four of us come down together. And we used to stop in Hindley Street at the - - -. There used to be a boarding house in Hindley Street. I can't think of the name of the place now. A very nice place. We used to come down by train.

Was that three families would come down?

Oh, two or three families. Only the boys - only us boys.

What age would you have been when you did this?

Oh, that was well before I left the farm - I suppose in about '18, 1918 or '19 or something like that.

How long would you stay down in Adelaide?

About a week.

What sorts of things would you do when you were down here?

Just go around visiting different factories and one thing and another.

Would that be on farm business?

No, just to see how they made things.

What sort of factories would you go to?

We went out to a bottle factory a couple of times, where they were blowing bottles and making bottles - and go to bike shops and see them making pushbikes and motorbikes.

Yes, I was going to ask you - I guess you'd have to do the running repairs on your motorbike?

Oh yes.

Is that how your learnt to do that?

Yes.

Would you go to, say, the Tivoli, or any of the theatres while you were down in Adelaide?

We used to go to West's sometimes, to see a picture show - silent. There was a picture theatre in Quorn - we used to go to that occasionally, but not too often.

Before you boys started coming down to Adelaide, did your family ever come down when you were younger?

No, very seldom. The girls would come down sometimes. They'd come with some of the other neighbours' girls, just for a couple of days.

How old do you think you would have been when you first remember seeing Adelaide?

I reckon it'd be about 1915 or '16 when I first come down.

Do you remember your first impressions of it?

No. I can just visualise it, that's about all.

What did you think of the city?

That there was a terrible lot of people kicking around, that there - not compared with what there is now.

Would you have gone to Port Augusta more than Adelaide?

Oh yes. Yes, we used to have a school picnic for the Mayor of Quorn. Used to have a school picnic every twelve month, and go to Port Augusta. He'd hire the train. There wasn't enough carriages, of course, mind to take them, because there'd be two or three hundred children'd come. They'd come from all of the schools all the way around and all the town schools. So they used to

have these open wooden wheat trucks, you know, and they'd just put planks across the trucks. And that's the way we used to go to Port Augusta - every twelve month.

Where would the picnic be held?

At Port Augusta on the beach - just on the beach. Go swimming and one thing and another. Well, paddling - none of us could swim. Well there was no water out there where we lived to learn to swim.

What about with the family shopping? Would you mainly rely on Quorn or would you have to go to Port Augusta for various things?

No, Quorn was pretty good in shopping in them days. My time, anyhow. We used to shop - Adams used to be our main shopping area - and we used to practically get all we wanted there. And of course if anybody wanted to go to Quorn, you'd call in when you passed their place - you'd sing out, 'Do you want anything from the town?' and if they wanted anything well you'd get it for them and bring it out. You'd work like a whole family, you understand.

I'd like to ask you a little bit more about your school days at Arden Vale. What age would you have started at school?

I reckon I'd have been about - I started there in about nineteen hundred and five. I would've been about seven years old.

Yes. And we were looking at the photograph of the school house before. You said that you didn't go to the brick building.

Yes, I went to that one. There was another one on this side an all weatherboard place. And the brick building, I might've went twelve or eighteen months to that brick building.

Was that towards the end of your school?

Yes.

Because that was built new in about - what was it, 1908 or something like that?

1906. I didn't think it was built as early as that. Must have been. Well at that rate. I must have went to school in about nineteen hundred and four, because I had a couple of years at the old school, I know that.

Yes, built in 1906. Perhaps it wasn't really used until about '07. And how many children at the school at the time you were going?

I suppose there'd be about twenty or thirty I suppose. Of course there was another school at Wyacca. That's been closed for the same time practically as that one there. And there was another school just over the hill, over on the

plain. See, there were schools nearly every ten or twelve miles apart. Now they've all closed down because they pick them all up in the mornings in the bus and drop them there of a night time, and they all go to the Quorn school.

Yes. You mention that the teachers often boarded with your family. Do you remember that before you went to school as well?

Yes, I think they did board there before.

What was it like having your teacher living in the home with you?

Oh, didn't seem to make much difference. She used to keep to herself pretty well. Of course she'd have to share the room with the other two sisters. But nobody else didn't take them in. We were the only ones that I remember. And then Miss Fitzgerald took it on then, and she was there for - oh, I don't know, for how many years. She was there until - when they reopened up again, you know, after it closed down, she took it on. And she used to go home every night. She lived at Depot Flats and that was about - two, three, four miles, from the school. But she used to drive there in a horse and sulky every day.

Which teachers do you remember in your time?

Well the only one that I had teach me was Mrs Leopold. She was - I can't think of her name now. She's Mrs Leopold now. She was a nice teacher. The funny thing is she got married and she lived next door to us, on the next farm. And it closed down then, after she left. Oh now, there was another one coming down there for about twelve or eighteen months. And then she left and the school closed down.

Yes, I think that was an occupational hazard of sending young women to the country to teach school. They tended to get married. What sort of subjects did you enjoy at school?

Oh well, we had mental arithmetic and a bit of geography. There wasn't too many subjects to deal with in them days, not like there is now.

Would you ever go out of the classroom for any lessons - nature study, or that sort of thing?

No.

What about sports? Were there enough children to play sports?

Oh, we used to play a bit of rounders and one thing and another - the boys. But there wasn't ever such a big crowd there in my time.

Did you ever have to stay away from school to do work around the home or around the farm?

No. Oh no, we always went to school while it was open. Unless we were sick or anything like that.

Did you know other families where the children were kept home to do work?

No. No, I think they all come to school.

Why exactly did the school close in 1910?

Because there wasn't enough children to go to school.

Were there still about twenty who could have gone?

No. See, they all moved and sold out. There was only about four or five there to finish up with.

Was this following a particularly bad period in the area - drought or something?

No, I think people must've sold out or something, and the children grew up and left school.

Because you said there was at least one other school in the area that closed down at about the same time.

Yes. I think that one kept going for about twelve month after, because there were more people living in that area.

Were the children in the families around you about the same age as you, and all growing out of school?

Yes.

So in your last year there were only four or five in the whole school.

Four or five, in the whole school.

That must have been a bit peculiar.

There was nobody there much, you see, and the others had grown out of school stage and they were working on the farms and got jobs in the town.

Two of those, I guess, would have been your younger brothers.

They kept going there, yes.

So what happened to them when the school closed?

I've got an idea they might have went to Quorn school. Wouldn't be sure. I was only thinking about that the other night. I've got an idea they finished up at Quorn school.

Would they have had to go and live in Quorn for a while?

Yes.

What about you? Was there any question of you going elsewhere to do a year or so more school?

No. See, and I come down - when the school closed down there - I come down to Emu Downs to the German school there, for about nine months, and when I went back the school was closed. And then I finished.

So the school at Emu Downs was a German-speaking school was it, for German families?

Yes.

And was that particularly for your Confirmation studies?

No, it was just a German school - a fairly big school. A lot of people in around there.

How did you feel about going away from home to do that?

Oh, I didn't like it. Still, it had to be done. That was the rules.

Was that the first time you'd been away from home for any period of time?

Yes, for any period of time.

How big was the family that you stayed with?

Oh, there was two families. There was the father and the mother, and then there was the elder son. He was married. And they were stopped there - they had a fairly big house. There were like the two families there.

How did that household compare to the one that you'd been brought up in? Did you find it different?

Oh yes, they were very religious, they were, the Schuppans down there - were very religious. You daren't start a meal without they were all sitting down - like a main meal. And of course he'd say Grace, and then after the meal was over he'd read a piece out of the Bible. And the ministers always used to stop there - they'd come over the weekend, and they always used to stop there with the Schuppans. Oh, they were pretty well off I think.

Did you find that there were things that you weren't allowed to do in that house that you had done at home?

Oh no. No, they were very good.

Were they on the land?

Yes. Had a pretty big farm, because they had a couple of men working for them, driving the teams of horses, and they'd go home of a night time. They were practically neighbours, you see, and when they finished a day's work out on the land they'd go home. Come back next morning.

That nine months that you were down at Emu Downs, did you go back and visit your family at all - back at Arden Vale?

No.

Did you get home sick?

Oh no.

Because that's quite a way away.

Oh it's quite a way away. We come down by train. When we come back we had to catch a train at Angaston I think, and we come as far as Gawler. We had to stop at Gawler one night to catch the train home.

Were you travelling on your own?

No, my brother come and got me. And my father took me down there. So really I've had a fairly mixed sort of a life, haven't I?

Yes. What did you think of your time at school on the whole? Did you think that it was worthwhile for what you did later in life?

Oh yes, I think so.

Are there things that you think might have been more useful for you to have learnt at school?

Yes, I suppose there would've been. You see, the work that I was doing in the Loco - in the Railways - well, it was mostly all labouring work. You didn't want much education for that, and I managed all right. That's where I picked up a lot of my, sort of, education, you see. In different jobs in the Railways.

I'd like to go on to talk about that. Because leaving school in 1910 - would you have finished up some time in 1911 at the German school?

Yes.

So you were only, what, thirteen - twelve or thirteen years of age at that time?

Yes, thirteen.

And you were saying earlier that you didn't start working the teams and so on until you went to your brother-in-law's place.

That's right.

So how would you have spent your days after you came back from Emu Downs, and working on the family farm as a thirteen year old?

Well I didn't - - -. See, after I came back, my first job - as I said, I went to my uncle's place at Hammond - and I drove a team there then. That was the first team I drove, and there was no rain in sight and everything was that dry and I

was only there a fortnight. And then I went home, and I was only home about a week or a fortnight and I went up to my brother-in-law's.

Why had you gone to your uncle's?

Well, he wanted an assistant, to put the seed in. That's how I finished up down there.

Were you expecting to stay there any longer than the two weeks?

No, he said it'd only be for a short time - put the seed in. I think I got fifteen shillings a week for that.

Had you ever got any pocket money or pay at home?

No.

So was that your first wage?

First wage.

Well, let's talk about going to work at your brother-in-law's. That was your sister Gus and your brother-in-law Otto [Hannemann]. Is that right?

Yes.

And they were at Wyacca.

That's right.

About how much further away from Quorn was that?

It was about nineteen miles from their place to Quorn. Our home was about half way.

So it was further north was it?

Further north.

How did the land there compare to Arden Vale?

Oh it was about the same. It was fairly hilly. I think it was more hilly than the one we had at Arden Vale. More in the hills, and of course they had a big scoop - big area that he owned a terrible lot, or leased, a terrible lot of the Flinders Ranges. And he went in for a lot of cattle in these Flinders Ranges, and it was about eight miles from one end to the other. And I think we lived - - -. His house was out in the middle of the - not in the middle of the Flinders Ranges, but in the middle of the area. So about every six month we used to have what we called a mustering day. So we'd leave home in the morning, on horse back, and carry a rifle with you, and a knife, and I'd start on one end and my brother-in-law would start on the furthest, and then we'd

meet half way and report on how many cattle we'd seen and how many was down and couldn't get up and we had to shoot them and skin them. Then we'd come home of a night time. Used to do that about every six months. Now - I'd think nothing, you know, killing a bullock or sticking a knife into a sheep when I was on the farm - but now I couldn't kill a sparrow. (laughs) Just what you get used to.

Well, let's just talk a little bit about what you wanted to do when you left school. Did you have any idea, whether you wanted to stay on the land, or what you wanted to do?

No. No idea at all. Well, I knew some of us had to get out of it because the place just weren't big enough. My father - that's why he bought those other two places. And he said to me one night - I was going into the town. In to see my wife, because she was living in the town at that time. And he come out - I had the horse and sulky - and he come out and he said, 'Well, Alf,' he said, 'we've been talking about you last night, your mother and myself'. He said, 'There's a few too many of us on the farm at the present time as you know. And there's thirty acres of land for sale just on the Quorn boundary, just on the outside of Quorn'. And he said, 'If you'd like to leave the farm at the end of the season' - that would be like in January after the farm was finished the season - 'I'd give you that block of land and you can go into the town to work if you wish to work in the Council. And if you don't like it, or can't get the job in there, well you're quite welcome to come back on the farm, because we can't turn you out. Somebody's got to go,' he said, 'and we thought it might be a good outing, seeing that you' - like, my wife was living in the town.

So anyhow, we agreed on that. So I went in and I had a job on the Council for a while, doing roadworks and one thing and another. I was working for my brother-in-law then after the Council had finished with me, he was building a house - he was a builder - and I was mixing the mortar and handing the stones and one thing and another.

And the call-boy come down from Loco - there were Loco sheds there, like the Railway Loco sheds - and he said to me, 'Well,' he said, 'Alf, you've got your name down for doing work in the Railways if there was a vacancy'. I said, 'Yes'. 'Well,' he said, 'there's a vacancy there on Monday. There's a chap leaving. He's going to Whyalla. He's only a labourer, and,' he said, 'you're the next on the list. So if you'd like to have that job it's yours. It may only be temporary though'. 'Oh,' I said, 'I can't leave my brother-in-law at a minute's notice,' I said, 'he's building his house'. And he heard me and he come around, and he said, 'Look Alf,' he said, 'if you can get a job in Loco in the morning' -

Monday morning, this was Friday - he said, 'you take it, because you've only got about another week and I'll be finished with you and I've got no more work'.

So anyhow, I started Loco on the Monday and I was there for forty three years. (laughs) Only labouring work. Of course when I got down to Loco - down Mile End - different class work altogether. It was all shift work down here most of the time.

Let's talk about moving into Quorn. You say your father - - -. Did he own the thirty acre block?

END OF TAPE 2 SIDE B: TAPE 3 SIDE A

Yes, well we were just talking about when you moved from the farm into Quorn.

Yes, I stopped with my sister. My married sister in Quorn, and her husband worked in the Railways as well. So anyhow, after I got the job in the Railway I decided to build a house on the block.

This is the block that your father bought for you?

Yes, bought for me.

Did he put it into your name?

Yes, he put it straight into my name. That was my whack, you see - it was my - - -. See he give the other boys - the other two that was left, one got the homestead and one got one of the other farms you see. And the other third place was split up between the two of them. And my eldest brother, they bought him a farm. I reckon he must've bought him a farm round about nineteen hundred and ten or something - started him off there.

How did you feel about that? Would you have liked to have stayed on the land?

No.

Why not?

Oh, I don't know.

Did you find that farm work wasn't something you wanted to do for the best of your life?

Oh, not altogether, but I'd like a change you see. So then I went into Loco and I was there for - - -. 1926 the Commonwealth took over and they transferred us all away. There was about 500 of us had to get the ..... out of Quorn. And we left Quorn when my son was twelve month old. So sixty years since I left the town. And I come to Mile End Loco and I stopped there till I retired.

Well I'd like to talk with you about that in a minute, but just a little bit more about those five years working in Quorn. First of all, you say you were living with your sister. You married at the end of 1921, is that right?

Yes.

So when did you build the house on the block?

Well, I joined the Railways in April - at the first week in April - and as soon as I found out that I got a job in there I got the builder on to the job straight away. My brother-in-law built the house for me.

This was your wife-to-be's brother was it? Your brother-in-law?

No, he was my brother-in-law, the builder was. He built the house for me.

So he was married to your sister?

Yes.

Which sister was that?

Lena.

Do you remember how much the house cost to build in those times?

Well it cost me over a thousand pounds to build the house at that time. There was no cupboards or anything. It was just the four roomed house - a stone house. I think nearly - about a thousand pounds.

Did your father help you with that?

No, I had a few hundred pound put down, then I borrowed it from the Lodge, the rest.

Which lodge did you belong to?

Druid Lodge. And I paid them off so much - - -. I had already paid them before I came down here.

How much would you have earned while you were working for your brother-in-law at Wyacca?

Well I worked with him for three years - three and a half years approximately - and he never paid me a penny till the day I finished, and he'd given me fifteen shillings a week the whole time that I was working for him.

So what lump sum did that come to?

Oh, I couldn't just work it out now - about three years, four years, at fifteen shillings a week - wouldn't be too much.

Why had that arrangement been worked out?

Oh, I don't know.

You said he was a fairly strict chap. Did he not trust you with the money?

No, but he never offered to pay me and I never asked him for it. I suppose I was glad to be of assistance to them.

How did you manage for clothing and things like that?

Oh, my mother used to supply me with clothing. My sister would - you know, every time she went to town she'd buy me a new pair of trousers or something like that. Never cost me anything. They used to pay for them.

Would they give you a little bit of money if you wanted to go into Quorn or something like that?

Oh yes, they'd give me a few bob that way.

So what were your wages when you started working at the Loco?

Well I don't really know what they were when they started, but I know what they were through the depression years. I was taking home five pounds three and six a fortnight, and I had the two children going to school, and I was paying eighteen shillings a week rent out of that lot. But I know the wages weren't too good - too much, back in 1921 when I joined the Railways.

You say that your brother-in-law was working for the Railways as well?

Yes, he was an engine driver.

I guess, as you say, an awful lot of people in Quorn did work for the Railways. So was that a sort of logical thing to go into?

Yes, up there it was, yes. Oh yes, it was a big railway town you see. There was the three lines coming in there. There was one from Port Augusta and there was the line from Adelaide and there was a line going up north, up to Hawker and Oodnadatta.

What did your work involve when you started there?

Well this is a funny one. I was a labourer - just a labourer you see. For the first job I got, I was sent to work with a carpenter - assisting a carpenter. And we had to put in a wooden floor in one of the old wooden trucks - they only had the wooden trucks in them days. So, he was a beggar. He used to go away sometimes - he'd be away from the job an hour, hour and a half. He'd go smoking and talking around the place. It was a pretty easy kind of place for a while. And he said, 'Now,' he said, 'while I'm away,' he said, 'I want you to pull those old boards up, and clean around the edging'. Like, it had an angle for the boards to fit down into. So I got going, working - you know, I was used to

pretty hard work. I had three or four chaps working on the road next door to me - a couple of - - -. It was like a repair road. They were watching me and never said anything.

So I had these boards up and cleaned up all around the side of it. I said to them, I said, 'What do I do now?' I said. 'He's not back yet'. 'Oh,' he said, 'all those new boards there got to go down in the trucks'. He said, 'There's the nails,' he said, 'they've got to be nailed in there you see'. So I thought, 'All right'. I gets the boards and I have half the floor in when he come back. And did he go me? Took every board up himself and nailed them down. He said, 'Your job is to clean up for me. You had no right to use a hammer'. Anyhow, he - they knew what was going to go on, you see, and they was expecting it. (laughs) Oh God, I'll never forget that day.

See, up there - they were more stricter up there, as far as a tradesman and an assistant was - than they were at Mile End. Up there, if you went to work with a fitter at Quorn, you wasn't allowed to tighten a bolt - put a nut on it. Your job was to hand them the tools, keep the tools clean, and the job that had to be done, you had to clean the job ready for him to work. Of course when we come down to Mile End, we started doing the same. And we got into hot water from the fitter. 'Why haven't you done this? Why haven't you done that' he said, 'while I was away?' (laughs)

And I finished up, and I got a job as a greaser. They wanted a greaser and I went greasing - locomotives. I think I was on that about eight or nine years I suppose. And I used to have to go down the pits and clean out the pits - not that it's underneath the engine. You can do all the greasing. Then I had a couple of bad turns when I was up there - you know, when I used to climb out the pits I used to get giddy. So I went to my doctor. He said, 'How much - have you got any long service leave?'. I said, 'Yes'. He said, 'How much?' I said, 'About six month'. 'Well,' he said, 'you apply for about four month of that'. He said, 'I'm not going to let you go back to work'. He said, 'You've had a bit of a heart turn'. But I think he panicked a bit. So anyhow, I was off for nearly four month that time with this heart business.

When I went back, he said to me one day, he said, 'I'm going to make arrangements for you to go and see the Railway doctor'. I said, 'What for?' He said, 'Oh,' he said, 'I want you to get a light job at Islington or something like that'. Oh God, Islington. Take me a week to get there and back. And I said, 'Oh,' I said, 'don't matter about that,' I said. 'I think I can get a light job down there without going to Islington'. Because the foreman down there, I knew him

pretty well. I'd done everything for him. So I went back and I told the foreman. 'Oh,' he said, 'don't do that Alf,' he said. He said, 'We'll see you right'. So, anyhow, they got me a light job. I had to test the boiler - the water in the boilers of the engines. As they come in I used to take a sample of every boiler and I had a little machine there where I used to have to test it and record it and tell them when there was dirty water in the boilers and all that. And that's how I finished up. Instead of going to Islington.

So about what age were you when you had the slight heart turn?

Fifty three.

Well, let's talk a little bit more about your time at Quorn. You say you were doing labouring work. Before you came down to Adelaide, did you learn any of the trades associated with it?

No.

So what sort of labouring work did you do?

Oh well, to finish up with, I was coaling engines. See, not this big crane business like they've got now. We had a stage and you'd throw the coal from the ground on to this stage. And there'd be another man on the stage would throw them on to the tenders of the engines.

Were these bags of coal?

No, just loose shovels. Coaling the engines there - I done that for a few years.

That'd be heavy work.

Oh that was heavy work. And all outside work. Whether it was raining or not, the engine had to be coaled to go out on to the next trip. So when I come down here - labouring down here - all sorts of jobs to start off with, didn't know where to put me and all that. There was that many of us to be placed and they were in a bit of a panic for a while and I got on to this greasing job, then, to finish up with.

You married in 1921. Was it November?

October.

Where did you get married?

Quorn Methodist Church.

Your wife's people, they weren't German were they?

No.

Yes, most of your brothers and sisters, I noticed, had married into local German families. Was there any pressure for you to do that?

No. No, they never pressured me.

Of course the time that we've been talking about, we've moved past the First World War when two of your brothers went away. Did you want to go as the war went on? Did you make any plans?

No. And of course when the Second World War was on, they sent me a notice to go for examination. Of course, being in the Railways, I was exempt, on account of essential jobs I suppose.

Yes. And was the house built by the time you were married?

Yes.

So you moved straight in?

Yes, straight in.

What sort of house was it?

A stone house - just the stone, no bricks. There was hardly any bricks about in them days. It was all quarried stone and the builder, he had to cut the stone - cut his own stone and fit it in here, and fit it in there. God, he was a good builder!

How many rooms did you have?

Four. Back and front verandah.

Was the back verandah used as the laundry?

Laundry and one thing and another. It was twelve feet from floor to ceiling. You walked in there on a hot day and it was just like walking into an ice chest.

Yes, it makes the world of difference doesn't it? And did your wife's people live in Quorn itself?

Yes, oh yes, they lived in Quorn.

What did her father do?

Well, he worked for the Council most of his time. He was overseer and Councillor and - - -. As far as I can remember he was working with the Council.

Was he more in administrative work or labouring work?

Oh no, he was like foreman of the Council like - charge.

In charge of the chaps working.

Yes. .... yes.

Was it through him that you got work on the Council?

No. No, the work just come in. They wanted a few men. There was a big flood there in nineteen hundred and twenty one - in January. We had eleven inches in a week. And of course there was water everywhere. There were wash-aways here and wash-aways there and of course we had to go on repairing roads there for a while. That's what got me into the Council.

What did you think after your first few years working in the town? Did you think that you'd made the right decision leaving the farm?

Oh yes.

Was there any looking back?

Oh, I think I made the right decision because they had a couple of bad seasons to start off with after I left. Something had to be done because there was too many of us there. The others - I think the other two younger brothers went out and got a job here and there on a station for a while, because there was nothing on the farm - no income, no wheat.

By the station, what do you mean?

Like the cattle stations up the north. A job up there for a while. Or anything that was going. They used to work for the District Council, a few odd jobs here and there.

Was the Mount Arden Station still an operating concern? I believe Arden Vale had been part of the Mount Arden Station. Did that still exist in your day?

No.

How did your find town life, living in Quorn?

Oh, all right.

Did you find it much different?

Oh yes. There was a bit of difference to start off with, but - - -. See, I'd really had about three years in Quorn - three to four years - from '21 till '26. And then we used to go home for lunch. We used to work five days a week in the Railways - Saturday mornings, day - or six days, rather. By the time you got home and you done a few chores - I used to run a few cows on the land.

Yes, because you had thirty acres. That's fairly big in the town. So did you crop it at all?

Yes. Brother from out on the farm, he come and put it in a couple of years for me.

Was that with wheat?

Yes.

Did you keep pigs and - - -?

No, just a few fowls. That's all we kept in Quorn.

Did you have your own horses?

I had the horse and sulky, that was all.

So your brother brought in working horses?

Oh yes, he brought the horses in and the implements and all. They put the crop in and then they come and took it off for me.

Did you have any involvement with the Trade Union when you started working at Quorn?

No.

Was there any sort of organisation?

Oh no, you pleased yourself whether you joined the Union or not there.

Was there any pressure to do so?

No.

What did you think the Union did back in those days?

Oh, they didn't do too much for you at all in them days. I think it was the Australian Workers' Union, I think, I joined in Quorn. And of course when I come down here, I joined the ARU - Australian Railways Union.

I was just thinking, as you say, the Commonwealth Railways took over the Great Northern Line in 1926. You said that affected 500 workers.

Yes, I reckon it would be. With the drivers and firemen and all connected - the clerical staff and everything - I reckon that'd be between four or five hundred men all told, had moved out of Quorn within the last - within the twelve month.

That must have made a huge difference to the town.

Oh - it just went bump. Wait till I tell you how long it was - - -. I had that four roomed house and I was renting it out for twelve months or two years before I sold it - or more. And the chap got that far behind in rent - - -. Well he was supposed to have - the bloke that was collecting the rent, whether he

put it in his pocket or not - but he went up the east-west line somewhere and it wasn't worth chasing bad money after good money, so my brother-in-law then - my wife's brother - he come down one day and he was going to get married. And he said, 'Do you want to sell your house?' I said, 'Yes'. 'Well,' he said, 'I'll give you four hundred pounds for the lot, land and all'. Well at that time four hundred pounds was a fair lot - in '39 - because I'd just bought this house at Clarence Gardens and that just about paid me off, with the money that I had saved to pay for this place at Clarence Gardens. So that's how I got rid of the place up there. Now today it's be worth nearly a hundred thousand dollars, or something like that - thirty acres of ground up there.

I'm a little bit confused with the dates here. You're saying you didn't sell the house in Quorn until 1939? So you kept it up there all those years.

Yes.

But you said you were only renting it for - - -.

Oh, about ten bob a week, or something like that.

That's about thirteen years, before you sold it.

Before I sold it. I used to paint it. In fact I went up there one day - - -. You see, when we had our holidays we used to go up there. The wife's people used to live up there. In fact she's still got her sister up there. And we went up there and I used to paint it in my holidays - and do any repairs around the place.

Was it worthwhile renting it all that time, or could you just not sell it?

You couldn't sell it. Nobody wanted it.

Do you think it cost you more to keep it on?

What could I do with it? Couldn't sell it. I was glad for the four hundred pounds cash - he paid me to cash.

With the Commonwealth Railways taking over the Great Northern Line, did they undertake to find work for everyone that was put out of work? How was that organised?

Well, they - - -. Most of them stopped with the State - State Railways. About six weeks before the Commonwealth took over - took over like on the first of January 1926, that's right. They all sent us a notice of where we desired to go when the Commonwealth took over. Port Lincoln or Mount Gambier, Adelaide, Terowie, Peterborough. And those that put in for Peterborough got Adelaide, those that put in for Mount Gambier got West Coast. There wasn't two out of the whole lot got what they applied for.

What did you put in for?

I put in for Peterborough because I'd be close to home, you see, because you could run - - -. There was your train every day from Peterborough to Quorn. I put in for Peterborough. And the first twelve months I was down here [at Mile End] I'd have pushed the pram all the way back to Quorn. (laughs)

How much notice did you have of the changeover?

Oh, well we knew it was coming. We knew it was coming a couple of years. They'd been talking about it. But really, definitely, we didn't know for sure till about two months before they took over. And of course most of their men come from Port Augusta and Stirling North. That's where they had their staff from. They shifted them up to Quorn. .... Most of the big work-shops went down to Port Augusta. See they had a big paint shop at Quorn. A carpenter's shop - well all that went to Peterborough.

It must have been a shock when you saw you were posted to Adelaide. Did you try to change it?

No.

What did your wife think of it?

Well, she didn't like it. No, the morning we come away - there was a ..... there used to be a train regular from Quorn to Adelaide every day - from Quorn. This Monday morning I think there was about four carriages, just men. Most of them stopped at Peterborough, a lot of them stopped at Terowie, and a lot of us got Mile End, and that's where I finished.

How many other blokes from Quorn, would you say, came down to Mile End with you?

Oh, there must have been about twenty or thirty.

So you weren't on your own.

Oh no.

How did you manage? How much time did you have to find a place to live in Adelaide? What did you do about that?

Well, I was boarding with some friends that had been at Quorn, you see. My wife stopped at Quorn. And I think I was only about a month or five weeks before I found a place to be rented - in William Street, Hilton. And of course we shifted down there then. They give me a day to go up - paid me - and a day to pack and a day to come back, and a day to unpack and all down here. They did give us about a week - the biggest part of a week - to transfer all

our stuff down here. Then we lived in front of - - -. We shifted from - - -. It was a thatched place that we lived in first and it was a pretty rough joint next door.

What sort of a place was that?

Oh, they used to have parties all night, and one thing or another. And the wife used to have to stop on her own there - afternoon shift and I was night work. So there was a place come vacant just over the road from us - single place on its own - and we shifted in there and I stopped there till 1939.

So this is in William Street.

William Street, Hilton. So then on the - - -. When he give me the notice he give me - - -. He used to come round and collect the rent every fortnight, you see. And the brother-in-law was collecting the rent - the brother-in-law that owned the house. He said, 'I want you out of here,' he said, 'in a fortnight's time'. 'Oh, God,' I said, 'you're tough'. He said, 'Why?' he said, 'This has been sold,' he said. 'Yes,' he said - he'd bought it himself. He was going to get married. I said, 'You've bought it? I've bought it in rent'. And I vowed and declared I wasn't going to rent another place.

END OF TAPE 3 SIDE A: TAPE 3 SIDE B

So I was afternoon shift. We were house hunting. And I was just going out the front gate. We were going to look at a place down at Cowandilla, like. Because I didn't want to get too far away from my work. And a knock come at the door and there was a man selling blocks of ground, from the Adelaide Developing Company. They'd bought a big block out at Clarence Gardens, you know, used to be a big dairy one time. Used to have a trotting track on it and everything. It's all built on now. They've got a big bowling green up there - at Clarence Garden - bowling green. I said, 'I don't want land,' I said, 'I want a house'. I said 'I've got to get out of here next week'. 'Oh,' he said. He said, 'They've got a house,' he said, 'They're putting the finishing coat on tomorrow'. I said, 'Where?' 'Oh, out at Clarence Gardens'. I said, 'Where the hell's Clarence Gardens?' (laughs) He told me where it was, so anyhow we got in the car.

He drove us down to have a look at it. And I suppose it was salesmanship. There was two others looking at the same place. So he come to me and he said, 'Now,' he said, 'if you want this place, you'd better come and sign up for it, because,' he said, there was others saying they wanted it. So I looked at the wife, and she said, 'Well,' she said, 'we've got to have a house'. You know,

there was no house there within any half mile of us - we was out in the never-nevers as the saying is. So we got in the car and we went up into Grenfell Street and we signed up for it that afternoon and I was back working three o'clock.

So I said to my mate what I'd done, you see. 'Oh, God,' he said, 'out there,' he said 'out in the never-nevers'. And I knew I'd done the wrong thing. So I got on the phone next morning and I wanted to cancel it. He said, 'No.' He said, 'You signed on the dotted line,' he said, 'and that's the end of it'. (laughs)

You were living in William Street in Hilton. It looks on the map that we were looking at, that you were - - -. Was there open space between you and the goods yard?

Yes.

Was it paddocks?

Yes, there was big paddocks. Belongs to Perry's - Perry's Engineering. They've built all that on the vacant land now. That's all under factory there now.

And did you walk across there to go to work?

I used to walk across there to go to work. It's only about five or six minutes walk. Of course when I come out here I used to ride a bike. I had to buy a bike, you see, and bike it out from Clarence Gardens.

Of course you and your wife had your two children - was it before you left Quorn?

Yes.

Coral and 1923 and Ted in 1925.

That's right.

Were they born at home or in hospital?

Yes, they were born at home.

Who would have helped your wife with the birth?

Nurse Rose. She was a nurse that goes - - -. She used to go around - sort of a midwife she was. She was very good.

Did you have a local doctor in Quorn?

Yes. Oh yes, there was a doctor there.

Would you have ever seen him while you were still on the farm? How did you manage when you got ill as a young man and a boy?

Oh, we had to go into the doctor in Quorn and he'd just have a look at you. Give you a bottle of medicine. Away you'd go.

Did you have any serious illness yourself as a young man?

No.

You said that your mother was quite ill for a time before her death.

Yes.

Do you know what that was from?

I think it was a stroke. I think it finished up as a stroke. And of course at that time they didn't have the medicine and one thing and another, and she was bedridden there for the last - six, or a couple of months, I suppose - before she died.

With your young family and having to change work, were you worried about what the future was going to hold for the family?

Oh no. Just took it from day to day. No, I suppose we were lucky. Coral got a job in town and Ted got a job at Leaver's before the war, and then he went to the war. And Leaver Brothers was pretty slack, so Myers wanted an accountant so he went over to Myers. From there he went on to - I think it was Chrysler's [at Keswick AK]. And they wanted an accountant you see, at the Education Department, so he put in for that and he got that. He finished up as Deputy Head up at Panorama.

Talking a little more about your work. You say that they had a bit of trouble placing the men that came down from Quorn. What sort of work did you do in the first months or so?

Oh, sweeping out the shed, or - - -. See, there was the round house - there was a big round house built there, and it wasn't quite finished. And we still had the old rectangular shed, you know, on the - - -. And we were shifting the stuff from the old shed into the new shed. And then when we got the new shed going, well I fell for this other job - greasing engines.

And you were with that for quite a number of years.

Yes.

What was the reaction with you twenty or thirty men moving down from Quorn? What sort of a welcome did you get?

Not too good.

Why was that?

Well, because a lot them was only fitters' mates and all that, you see, and carpenters' assistants. And in the Railways they used to work on seniority. Well all the chaps that come from Quorn had a lot of service. Of course the other chap had to go down as a labourer and the senior man got the job. So we weren't very popular. See, some of them up there, they might have had twenty-odd years service before they come down here. And these other chaps only had a few months or years. Of course they dropped down to labourer's wages and - - -.

Yes, I imagine that must have caused quite a deal of ill feeling.

Oh yes, we weren't too popular for a while, but still they could see the position after a while. We finished up all right.

Was there any mischief made towards you at all?

Oh no.

You had to change from one Union to another, did you, when you moved from Quorn to Adelaide?

Well, I changed because I think I am about the only member there was of the AWU, you see, and they were all ARU members down here, so I joined the ARU - keep me with them.

Did you take an active part in Union work?

No.

You've already said a little bit about how working conditions compared in Quorn and Adelaide - in particular how you weren't allowed to do certain things at Quorn. How else did you think that work conditions differed in Adelaide than from Quorn?

Oh, they were more stricter with you down here than they were up there. It was, you know - - -. There was plenty to do and as long as you'd done your work they didn't care if you had a little bit of an ease off. But down here they - they'd start off as they'd like to keep you, moving all the time. Apart from that it was no different. The foreman that was in charge here knew what the position we were in, and he gave us all a pretty good go.

I guess you would have been working with a lot of other men up at Quorn. Were you one of several hundred working at Quorn in the yards?

Yes, I suppose there would have been - - -. Not altogether working in the shed, but, this includes this couple of hundred of the running staff and all, and the traffic porters and clerks and all that you see. In the shed itself up at Quorn, I don't suppose there'd be more than 150 men, like, in the carpenters' shed and that, all told. Well you knew everybody and everybody knew you.

That must have changed when you came to Adelaide.

Oh yes.

How many men would you have been working with down here, at, say the Mile End yards?

Oh, I suppose there'd be about fifty on each shift I suppose. Shift work, you see. Sometimes there'd be more on day shift than there was on afternoon and night shift.

Did you start on afternoon shift?

No. No, I started on day work for a while.

About how long was it before you went on to shift work?

Oh, about twelve months I suppose.

Was it your decision?

No.

Had you ever worked shift work before?

No.

How did you find it?

Didn't like it. One bloke got dismissed, or something - that's how I got shift work. I don't know, he done something on the shift that he shouldn't have done and they give him the sack and they put me in his place, and that's where I finished.

Were you greasing engines at that stage?

No. Because I had to learn the job. It didn't take much to learn. Oh, it wasn't a bad place to work. Dirty - very dirty, though - Mile End. Well, all locomotives - working amongst the big engines. Especially on a Sunday night, you'd go in there and there'd be about eighty to ninety engines making up steam to go out in the traffic in the morning, and you can guess the smoke and steam that there was about. Sometimes you wouldn't be able to see through the window from smoke. But now they wouldn't. They wouldn't put up with that now.

I guess to a large extent it must have been fairly dangerous for you.

Oh yes. Oh yes, you had to know your job. If you didn't, well you'd soon find out.

How long was it before you started working on the engines - greasing the engines? About what year do you think you started on that?

Oh, we come down here in - I think it was 1926. I reckon it might've been about 1927 when I started ..... .

Can you tell me a little bit about what that involved?

Oh, you had to oil all the engine boxes and all the side rods and all the joints and one thing and another. It was all done on a mileage system you see. Every time an engine come in from traffic, or she was booked up for greasing, or - - -. You had to grease so many engines on each shift, ready to go out on the next trip.

Would there be a team of you working on one engine?

Well there would be, yes. Then, of course, after a while, there was a bit of trouble. Something went wrong. One of the engines run a hot box or something, and they both signed the sheets, you see, and they didn't know who to blame - on this particular box. So anyhow, from then on they issued each one with a different sheet and you were responsible for that sheet.

When did that happen?

Oh, must've been - - -. I might've been on the job about six or seven years before that happened. Oh no, there was all sorts of work down there.

Did you have different sort of people working at Mile End than you'd been used to at Quorn?

Yes, especially after the war. They'd give you a job after the war. They had a a lot of New Australians coming on the job, you see - labourers and handy-men. And there was a chap there, he was supposed to teach them all these jobs, you see. And he couldn't make a success of it. So his foreman called me into the office one day and he said, 'Now,' he said, 'how about you taking on the job?' I said, 'Why pick me?' 'Well,' he said, 'we just thought, give you a go'. He said, 'You'll have about two or three different men each week to teach them different jobs,' because there [were lots of AK] jobs down there - doing this or that. I said, 'All right'. So anyhow, I went out - took some new ones on every week. He called me into the office one day, and he said, 'What have you got that nobody else has got, Alf?' I said, 'Why?' 'Well,' he said, 'I haven't had a single complaint about it since you've been on that job. What do you do?' 'Well,' I said, 'I tell a man what he's supposed to do - show him what he's got to do you see. Then I'll go away for a while. I don't stand over him, because if you stand over him you sort of get them all flurried. And that's the way I

teach them'. 'Oh well,' he said, 'carry on with the job'. So I got that job for about six months - teaching everybody the different jobs.

Yes. We were looking before at the street that you were living in at Hilton, and I was commenting that most of the people there in the 1920s at least, seemed to work with the Railways in one job or another. How did you find you fitted in when you moved down from Quorn? Did you know your neighbours, or get to know them?

Oh, didn't get to know them, not till we got into the house. Because there were two or three Railway men living in the same street on the same side as us and we got to know them then. And then they started a tennis club at the back of our place. There was a vacant block - used to belong to .... the factory man, and he let us put up a tennis court there, and that's how we got to know one another there. But we lived in there in the depression years, and I - funny thing to say - but I reckon that was really the best years of my life, the depression.

Why do you say that?

Well, because everybody was on the same level. Nobody had anything and if you had a pound of tomatoes growing in your garden, instead of throwing them in the dump, you'd give them to the next door neighbours. And it'd go on that way you see. We were all on the - practically on the one level.

Yes, from what you said earlier, perhaps it was a bit more like country life, with everybody helping each other.

Yes. No, it was a very nice street to live in, but I wouldn't like to live there now. Ted took me for a run there about twelve month ago - William Street. Oh, it's all factories there now.

You said when you first came down from Quorn you found - was it a thatched house?

Yes.

Was that in William Street as well?

Yes, that was in William Street - just opposite where this other house come vacant.

You would have had your wife and young family there. What did she think of the place that she was living?

What, the house on its own?

Yes.

All right, but she didn't like the other place. Oh, they used to come and knock at the door of a night time, you know, and want to get in and all that. So I

said, 'No, you've come to the wrong joint,' because there was two or three of them built the same - these attached places you see.

Was there fairly unsavoury goings on next door?

Yes.

Did you not notice it so much when you moved across the street?

Oh no, it was different altogether. That's one thing about them, they didn't interfere with anybody else - like, this mob that used to come there - they'd keep to themselves.

Was it drinking and prostitution?

Yes, bit of both I think.

Was there trouble with police?

No, I never seen any police.

I guess it must have been a bit of a shock, coming down from the country, moving next door there.

Yes.

And what sort of a block did you have in William Street when you moved into your own single house?

[queries question]

When you moved across the road into the house?

How big a block?

Yes.

Oh, just an ordinary building block. I think it had about fifty five feets frontage I think, about 150 long - plenty of room for a garden. And I loved gardening. I used to grow my own vegetables and fruit trees and one thing and another.

Did you keep any animals?

Only a few chooks.

Were the open paddocks behind you used for grazing at all?

Oh, the big, big paddock was sometimes. They used to have some cattle in there or sheep - not sheep, horses. And that's all built on now.

I was reading that the years that you started down in Adelaide, coincided with W.A. Webb taking over as Commissioner of Railways. Did that have any affect on your working life?

No. He reckoned the engines -- - -. Before he come here, oh, the engines used to be spotless, spotless. You could get a white handkerchief and rub over the boilers and all that - you'd hardly soil them. And the copper tops. You had to get the soot out of the funnel and clean the tops off - copper tops round the funnel, and the number plates. Especially a passenger engine - oh, God. And then when he come down here, he cut all that out. He said, 'The engines are not come here for show,' he said, 'The engines are here to work'. And of course he done away with all that. Oh, they was too fussy in them days. They went from one extreme to the other. The driver would come in with a collar and tie on, but finished up with an old dirty shirt.

Did you ever meet Webb? Did he come down to the works at all?

No.

So were you still doing that very finicky cleaning when you started at Adelaide?

Oh yes.

And then the changes came.

Yes.

What did the men think of that?

Oh, they didn't like it. The driver didn't, because he used to have to dirty his clothes.

I guess you would have been working on different engines over the years.

Oh yes.

Webb brought in bigger ones did he?

Yes, he brought the big ones in.

Was that much different for your line of work?

Oh yes, made a lot of work. Of course they pull a bigger load. Yes he brought the 500 and the 600 class and 700 class. Oh, there was all sorts. The little old P class that used to run on the Bay Line, you know.

P class?

Yes. You could practically get them in - - -. They'd come off the road. You could just about push them back with a crowbar.

Did you get into the city much in those early years working at Mile End?

No, I didn't much. Because of the time then, you know. Used to work five and a half days a week when there was day work. Sundays you'd look for a bit of a rest - done a bit of gardening.

In those early days, did you get up to Quorn much?

We used to go up there regularly. Time we got our holidays. Every twelve months I used to just about go up there.

How long would your holidays be?

About a fortnight.

Would you go back to the farm?

Oh yes, used to go out to the farm and have a look round. Never altered much.

I think we've covered a lot of ground today. It's been very interesting indeed.

Well I'm glad of that.

Yes. It's been a varied life. You've seen quite a lot of changes over the years. Thank you very much for talking with me today.

Oh, that's all right. As long as I haven't bored you, that's the main thing.

No, you certainly haven't.