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Full transcript

of an interview with

PHYLLIS DUGUID

13 August 1982

-
by

Mary Hutchison

for

**AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY
WOMEN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

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PHYLLIS DUGUID

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AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN - SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

MRS. PHYLLIS EVELYN DUGUID (nee LADE)
B.A. Hons. (1925)

MRS. PHYLLIS DUGUID (nee LADE)

M.H. ORAL HISTORY PROJECT ON EARLY WOMEN GRADUATES.

Interviewee : Mrs. Duguid (P.D.)
Interviewer : Mary Hutchison (M.H.)

13 August, 1982.

I thought we'd start at the beginning of your life with your early schooling. You were born in Victoria, but you came over here as a child, when you were about five or six.

P.D. About six, yes.

M.H. Then, I suppose it was your primary school years you went to Poltoonga?

P.D. Yes, until I was about 11, at Miss Henderson's, you know, in Harrow Road, St. Peters. It was a very fine little private school and it was a happy time there, except for the fact that the war broke out while I was there, so it was rather a sad time. The last two years I was there was war time and I well remember the frightful stories that went about, about atrocities and so on and so forth. Then in 1916 I went to M.L.C. when I was about eleven, and finished there.

M.H. And you took the Higher School Certificate, or ... what was it called?

P.D. Oh in those days it was ... well Matriculation ... it was really the Senior and many of us went on to what was called Higher Public. Later on it was called Leaving Honours do you remember? Well it was Higher Public in my day. Matriculation was based on the Senior, but many of us, especially those who hoped to go to University, went on to Higher Public and in fact if you did well in Higher Public you found first year university very easy. It was, I think, quite a high standard in those days. I think Leaving Honours was too.

M.H. So you went to university in 1921?

P.D. 1922.

M.H. 1922 ... and you actually changed the course that you did, didn't you? What did you do at first?

P.D. I started doing Classics with Professor Darnby Naylor. We had done Latin and Greek at school in those days and I was very keen and I did first year Honours Classics, with Professor Darnby Naylor and then the school of English was started. There hadn't been a school of English until 1923 and when Professor Archibald Strong came in 1923 and started the school of English Language and Literature it was ... I changed over from Classics. Professor

- P.D. Naylor was a bit disappointed I think because he didn't have many students then. Classics was becoming less popular even in those days, and I think he was a bit disappointed to lose one more.
- M.H. Can you say something about the reason why you changed? What was particularly attractive about English?
- P.D. Yes, well I always loved English. I think I would have said that English literature was my great love, even at school, although I was fond of Classics as well, and I think it was partly not only the attraction of English literature, but partly the thought that after I had finished, I hoped to be married and have children and I felt that the course in English literature would have more lasting pleasure for me. And looking back I am sure that is so, because I could only have taught Classics, I suppose, and I would have been quite out of touch with classical scholars, whereas English literature has remained a great joy to me all my life. So I think the change was good.
- M.H. Some questions about how the decision to attend University was arrived at: Now you have already told me that your father had a philosophy degree and that quite a few of your brothers and sisters went to University so it was obviously something that was happening in your family.
- P.D. Yes ... It seemed the natural thing to do. If you did well at school, it seemed to be the natural hope that you might go to the University. Of course I wouldn't have been able to go if I hadn't won a bursary. Because in those days you didn't go to the University without paying fairly high fees and so one worked very hard with the hope of getting a bursary. And this wasn't easy, because in those days there were only 12 given for the whole of the state.
- M.H. I wondered how many. I thought there would be very few.
- P.D. Only twelve. And I was trying to remember ... four were given for Arts students, four for Law, four for Medicine and I can't remember whether the other four went to Science or Engineering, but there were only 12, and they were limited in that way. So I was fortunate to get one of the four Arts.
- M.H. Did all those bursaries go to girls in the Arts?
- P.D. Oh no. It was open.
- M.H. Have you any idea of the proportion of girls to boys who won bursaries in your year?
- P.D. No, I can't tell you that because ... I don't happen to remember any other girls who had an Arts bursary at that time, though I do remember one of the Law girls who had. So I would think it was ... a wild

- P.D. guess would be perhaps one in four, but in Medicine, probably they all went to boys because very few girls did medicine in those days. Surprising number did Law. Several girls just ahead of me at M.L.C. went into Law and won bursaries. It was rather an uncommon year.
- M.H. Who were they? Do you remember?
- P.D. Yes. Edna Homes was one ... I am trying to remember their maiden names, you see? Gwen Ure, these two went into Law. I can't remember the third. And in that same year Kathleen Hassell won an Arts bursary. It was a very brilliant year for M.L.C.
- M.H. To go back to your family: Your eldest sister didn't go to University, or she went part-time, didn't she?
- P.D. She went part-time. She was very interested in history and she did some history lectures but she didn't ever take a degree.
- M.H. Did she do that before you went to university?
- P.D. Oh yes, she was 5 years older than I. I was still at school when she was doing this. She was doing some teaching with the Education Department, although she didn't have a degree. I suppose in those days she would have been a "pupil teaching.... I don't *teache* know.
- M.H. Yes.
- P.D. I expect so, because she was teaching at the Adelaide High for a while. She was regarded as a very gifted teacher. She gave teaching away in the end and went into business, and she didn't ever do anything more with academic work.
- M.H. Well, after her there was your brother and then you. So you were the first one, the first girl to go to university full-time.
- P.D. Yes, that's right, yes.
- M.H. What do you think would have happened if you hadn't won the bursary?
- P.D. I don't know. I was wondering about that after our last talk. I just don't know what I would have done. I would possibly have drifted into teaching, because one could do that without a degree. In fact one of my younger sisters went to the university through the Education Department. She was bonded to the Education Department and she did her degree in that way. It is possible I might have done that, but looking back I really can't say that I had any clear alternative at the time.
- M.H. Why did you consider university education important?
- P.D. I don't think I did consider it important. I think I considered it extremely attractive.

- M.H. Lovely answer. What about the other members of the family? I imagine you had a fair degree of support for your decision to go to the university.
- P.D. Oh yes, I did although my younger sisters warned me : 'Now then remember .. still care about your clothes and don't go round looking like a blue stocking when you get to the university.' That rather shows you the kind of attitude that still prevailed a bit amongst people.
- M.H. That's interesting because I think we are quite interested in what other people thought about a woman undertaking university studies. So you had this attitude from your younger sisters.
- P.D. They supported me.
- M.H. But they were rather teasing you?
- P.D. Yes, that's right.
- M.H. What about other friends of yours?
- P.D. They were all supportive, but there was quite a strong feeling, I think, in the community, that women should stay in the home, you know, and that a woman's place was the home. There was quite a lot of that kind of talk. I remember that came from one of my brothers' girl friends, my older brother. She was the one that I told you about, who was brought home from some very attractive work because her father said he didn't want it to be said that he couldn't support his daughter. And that little group that were friends of ours, you had this rather looking at a girls wanting to go to university. And what was the good of it any way? She would probably marry and she wouldn't use her degree. But I wouldn't have regarded that as serious opposition at all. } ?
- M.H. Did you feel that you were going against the grain of convention?
- P.D. No. No, not really, no not by that time.
- M.H. How would you have justified yourself to these people who thought it probably wasn't much use?
- P.D. Well, I think I was beginning to be a pretty keen feminist, even in those days, so I think I would have said - what was good enough for a boy was good enough for a girl. I also you see, would have had very strong support from my mother - father as well of course - but thinking of women folk, because she felt very strongly that a girl should be given an opportunity to find some method of earning her own living and she wouldn't allow any of us ... there were four of us ... she wouldn't allow any of us just to stay home and be what was called the homegirl, until we had done something else.
- M.H. That was quite interesting, given her career, because in fact she hadn't had ...

- P.D. She hadn't had it and in fact, I think she felt the loss of it. I think she felt very strongly, all her life, I think she felt the economic dependence of women on the man was not a good thing. It is quite interesting in those days.
- M.H. So you saw university at least as a basis for economic independence?
- P.D. Oh yes, I think so, I think that I felt that whatever I did in the way of earning, that my university degree would at least be a help you see. But I wasn't very clear in my mind what I wanted to do beyond the four years university course. I hadn't felt any strong urge to be a teacher, for instance. Although once I did do teaching I just loved it, more than I expected to do, but I think one lived almost a year at a time, you know? Here was this four years ahead of pretty hard university work and I was looking forward to it and I suppose I thought something would turn up.
- M.H. You mentioned that the idea of going to university was very attractive. Can you say what sort of things you found so attractive?
- P.D. After I got there?
- M.H. Well, the things that attracted you about it ... I mean you didn't have a clear idea about a career.
- P.D. No, I suppose there would have been a certain amount of ambition that to have a university degree was a ~~thing~~ worth going for. I think, in those days, one would have felt that, because a university degree wasn't such a common thing in those days. So there would have been a certain amount of ambition, I suppose. And I think I always enjoyed study, and to have four years ... looking back on it now, I often think "How marvellous to have all those years of study, of being able to go into a library or to a private study and read and read and read and think". I think it is a marvellous thing. Looking back on it I am confirmed in that ... with all the agony of exams and tests and all the rest of it which are rather a blot on the landscape ... apart from that, it was a great life.
- M.H. Where were you living when you were going to university?
- P.D. For the first years we were living down at Brighton and that was rather fun because I used to go up on the same train every morning from Brighton to the university with a group of girls who were all doing something different. One was working in an office, somebody else was in a shop, and the same little group went everyday. It was about a half-hour trip in the train, I suppose, and that was very enjoyable. But then my father was appointed as the principal of the new theological college up in North Unley. It is now Parkin-Wesley College, so we came to live up there in North Unley and the rest of my time at

P.D. university was quite close to town at Unley.

M.H. So how did you get to university from North Unley.

P.D. Tramcar, always.

M.H. And did you spend everyday at the university?
How many hours would you ...

P.D. Oh yes, yes. I would have spent every day. It would have been, I think, almost necessary because with your lectures scattered throughout the day - every day would have had some lectures - probably two, so it wouldn't have been worthwhile to go home. So you spent all day at the university, either in the public library or the university library, which was very small then, of course. So, unless there was some special reason you didn't go home, during the day. In fact sometimes you stayed on in the evening for faculty meetings of some kind, you know. It was a very happy social life. Because the university was so much smaller, you knew people better.

M.H. Lets talk a bit about those social activities. What sort of things did you get involved with?

P.D. Well, there was always sport of course. I was a keen hockey player, and sport drew us all together. The women, of course, had The Cottage. You've heard about The Cottage I suppose?

M.H. Yes. Please tell me about it.

P.D. We had marvellous times there. We ... nearly all of us took our lunch there. Certainly all the Arts students and the Law students. The Medical students not ~~to~~ so much: they had a rather different life although they came to The Cottage sometimes. But we all took our lunch down there and we had all sorts of happy affairs raising money to furnish the Cottage better. I remember marvellous concerts to raise money for a piano. We had one or two very clever people ... you've heard of Hope Crompton? Yes, well Hope used to write awfully good sketches for us and we would get up these concerts, and they were well attended by some of the professors, I remember. They used to think that we were a very bright lot and they would come. The concerts would generally be held in the Prince of Wales Theatre, and we raised money and bought our piano. All sorts of things like that went on. They were very, very happy. *times.*

Crompton

M.H. Did you have debates or anything like that?

P.D. Yes, I was going to say we had a very keen debating club, and the debates were always held in The Cottage.

M.H. Can you remember any of the topics for the debates?

P.D. No, I am afraid I can't. I remember some of the keen debaters, but I don't remember the topics meantime. But I remember the sausage teas (laugh). You 'll wonder what the sausage-teas were. We used to have tea together before the debates in the evening, very

P.D. often, rather than go home, and some how or other we always seemed to have sausages. We used to cook our own meals down there in the kitchen, and these sausage teas became quite a regular feature of our social life. Great fun! We'd cook our sausages, you see, in the kitchen. The cottage had several rooms, and the debates would be held in the so-called drawing room. They were really splendid. I think we had a much better social life at that time than the men did, because they had only their sports room. There was a room just - it was abutting on the old Prince of Wales theatre, and that one room was the only club they had. I don't think they had nearly such a good time as we had.

M.H. Were there activities when men and women mixed together, say for faculty activities?

P.D. Oh yes. I remember most, of course, the Arts Society. The faculty of Arts had its own society or club or whatever you call it, and men and women mixed there. And there were dances too, and socials of all sorts.

M.H. So did you find that you generally had friends within the university, or did you maintain friendships with people outside?

P.D. No, not so much, not so much. In fact it's rather interesting ... I have found over the years that my closest friends now are people I knew in university days rather than school days.

M.H. So they were lasting friendships?

P.D. I think so, yes. You developed so much in common during those years.

M.H. The Women Graduates Association would have been well formed by the time you were at university?

P.D. I think so. I can't remember much about that. Somehow I don't remember hearing much about the Women Graduates' Association while I was a student. Then afterwards I became pretty heavily involved in other things and I think I have really known more about the Women Graduates' Association in later years than I did then.

M.H. You joined after you left university?

P.D. I expect I did. I just don't remember.

M.H. Just go back to your friendships with women a bit, and The Cottage : One of the reasons I asked about the debates and the topics was because I was interested in the sort of issues that you might have discussed, and whether you can remember anything about that.

- P.D. Yes, oh yes. Well one thing I can remember, we were very keenly interested in the League of Nations. You see, those years were the years after the end of the first war and the whole idea of world peace and the League of Nations were very important to us and I guess that many of our discussions and debates would have been on that kind of subject. I am just wondering whether we debated equal pay for equal work. I dare say we did (laugh), but I haven't any clear recollection of it.
- M.H. That would have been the sort of thing that you were starting to think about at that stage?
- P.D. Oh yes, oh yes, I think so.
- M.H. Do you know where, or how, you would have started thinking about that? I mean about things like equal pay. You were saying before that you were starting to be a very strong feminist.
- P.D. Well I myself always was I think. I always felt very keenly about problems associated with equal status for women. But we were tremendously absorbed in our studies and I don't think, from what I hear of university life now, I don't think there was anything like the interest in the outside world. We had our debates, and we had our personal interests and keennesses, but as for having anything like a demonstration for or against this, within the university that would have been just not on!^A
- M.H. Did you feel that there were other women there that were as interested as you in feminist issues?
- P.D. I think so. I think we would have had lots of quiet discussions along these lines.
- M.H. I am really quite interested in what was supporting your thought about these things ... Whether it was some people whom you bounced ideas off or whether it was something in the air and you became involved in it?
- P.D. You mean in the university days?
- M.H. Yes.
- P.D. I can't help you there. I don't think. I haven't any clear recollection of any particular friend of mine or anyone who, perhaps, felt as strongly as I did. A number of my friends, of course, in those days, were connected with the Education Department, and they would, of course, have been quite keen about equal pay for equal work. I do remember that, and we would have that sort of discussion in The Cottage. But I don't remember any organised sort of movement, or any club, for equal status. In fact it was many, many years later that the Women Graduates' Association had a series of study circles ... I don't think they have them now ... and one of them was on equal status.
- M.H. And were you involved in this?

- P.D. Yes, I was very keen. I was very keen on that while that lasted. But that was many years later and I don't remember any sort of movement of that kind. It was partly, I think, because my university years were so soon after the first war, don't you think, and the League of Nations?
- M.H. It could well be.
- P.D. I think so.
- M.H. What about your own personal position? Was it, you think, your family and your mother who was involved in helping you develop these ideas? Would that be a right suggestion?
- P.D. Yes, I think so. My eldest sister would have been a keen feminist in her own way, and my mother, I think, was very well ahead of her time. I think she was very, very conscious of the disabilities of the late Victorian age. She used to say to me sometimes, about a thing like sex education ... She'd say, 'Now you girls are fortunate you can read, you have the words, we hadn't' You can follow what she meant, can't you? And she really was very much ahead of her time in many, many ways. She felt the lack of her own education. I don't know how far she went at school, but after school she did the singing, and the painting and the drawing and that sort of thing, belonging to a fairly wealthy home, but she did feel her own lack of higher education, so we would have had every bit of support from her. She was a person of very, very bright, sweet common sense, and looking back I value that tremendously ... a great sense of fun.
- M.H. She sounds wonderful.
- P.D. Yes, she was a dear.
- M.H. Can you remember any particularly - I suppose we would say radical to-day, but you might have said advanced women students. Perhaps another way of putting it might be those who seemed to be quite unconventional?
- P.D. In some ways. Did you want me to mention names?
- M.H. Yes. I am interested in whether there were any and who they were.
- P.D. Yes. Well one person I can remember that we regarded with great affection and felt that she was fairly progressive, was Margaret McGuire - she was Margaret Cheadle. She married E.P. McGuire, and we felt that Margaret was always on for new ideas ... but ... I am only thinking of her as a bright person. She didn't do anything particularly progressive. I mean she had had a very interesting life, of course, and she has written and done all sorts of interesting things, but nothing that I would regard as wildly way out, you know, or progressive. But she was a very bright person. There were lots of people there at the university who were progressive, because, as I say, there were not many of us, really. The women medical students, for instance, were not very many.

DP

Maguire

- P.D. The lawyers you could name and so they all stand out in my mind as bright, progressive people, but not particularly way-out or different if you know what I mean.
- M.H. What about somebody like Hope ^dCrompton? She was. >
- P.D. Oh yes, Hope was a very, very bright person, full of fun and wit, and she was in the Arts faculty, so of course I saw a lot of her. She was one of the few who was on the staff of the university later on. I think I told you I was on the staff for the first year after I graduated. I was appointed a tutor.
- M.H. I'd like to talk about that in a minute. There's just one area of questions I am conscious I haven't gone through yet. Just some questions about the departments, or the faculties, in which you were studying. Just to take them each separately: In the Classics area, were there many women?
- P.D. Yes, it was a very small group altogether and there were more women than men, as far as I can remember. I was only there in my first year and there would have been second and third and fourth year students. There were more women than men I feel sure. There weren't many of any at all. There were only two of us in first year ... this was Honours Classics, you know ... doing the honours course. You would know the names of some of them: Kathleen Hassell, you know her name ... and Flo Piper? You don't know her name. No, she left South Australia soon after graduating and you wouldn't know her. She was doing Honours Classics one year ahead of me. And in this first year with me was Ida Dorsch (Ida Karney). You know the name Dorsch? Yes, well Ida was a Classics student with me. She went on and finished the Classics course when I moved over to English. But it was a very small group.
- M.H. Did you ever notice within that group that women were treated differently from men?
- P.D. No, not at all, not at all.
- M.H. What about the English area? Were there more women or more men in that?
- P.D. We are speaking of the honours group, aren't we? Because the first year English class would have been enormous, because it would have been a compulsory subject, probably, from the Education Department point of view. I just forget. But it is easier to remember the honours group because it was so much smaller.
- M.H. Well that was your group.
- P.D. Yes. In the honours English group there were three women, I think, and two men, who started that particular honours group. So again more women than

- P.D. men. Oh no, at the university, I would say there was absolutely no discrimination between men and women, except when it came to one point and that would be appointment to staff. It was rare for a woman to be appointed.
- M.H. So that when you were appointed as tutor, that was something quite unusual?
- P.D. Well not terribly, because there had been a woman tutor before me, in this English department. And there were women laboratory assistants and probably tutors, in other branches that I just didn't know about. But there was no woman lecturer.
- M.H. No senior.
- P.D. No, no senior person, just the assistants. So I would say there was discrimination in that sense.
- M.H. What about salaries? Would your salary as a tutor have been different from a male?
- P.D. I don't think so. I wouldn't know that for certain, for there was no precedent for a male tutor. The woman who was a tutor before me was the first and I was the second. I well remember when the professor offered me the job he said to me (he was a very shy man, Professor Strong), he seemed almost shy about mentioning such a thing as salary. He said, 'The salary will be 200 pounds a year.' That was the recognised salary for a tutor in those days. Pretty small isn't it?
- M.H. It seems small. Did you feel that it was small then?
- P.D. No, no I didn't. I thought to have 4 pounds a week of my very own was marvellous.
- M.H. That's independence for you.
- P.D. Yes, and of course in addition to that I did quite a lot of coaching.
- M.H. Did you?
- P.D. Yes, quite a lot and some of it was referred to me by the professor. I had quite a number of students. I would go to their homes privately, referred by the professor. So that helped my salary and helped my interest greatly.
- M.H. So this first year when you were tutoring would have been 1926?
- P.D. 1926 yes. It was a very happy year. It was lovely to have my own little study. I had a little place downstairs in the old Prince of Wales theatre, and there was constant catavaulting from the Elder Conservatorium (laugh). You know, people practising their singing and sometimes it was hard to concentrate, but I thought it was just marvellous to have a

- P.D. place of my own. And I enjoyed the tutoring immensely. I enjoyed the person to person contact with students. I don't think I ever would have enjoyed lecturing as much as I enjoyed that.
- M.H. So how long were you there?
- P.D. Just a year.
- M.H. And then what happened?
- P.D. Well then at the end of that year the staff was reduced from what it had been when I went there - it had been professor, 2 lecturers and one tutor and it was reduced to professor and one lecturer, so of course the tutor went and one of the lecturers.
- M.H. This was depression.
- P.D. Oh yes, yes. It was a case of everybody pulling in their horns, very much.
- M.H. How did you feel about that?
- P.D. Oh, I felt very disappointed, very disappointed, and I think really I was not given sufficient notice about it either. I told you the professor was a very shy man (laugh) and I think he was very shy about telling me that this was going to be done and they didn't tell me until very close to the end of the year. It was a bit difficult then to think about looking out for another job.
- M.H. Oh goodness! So what did you do?
- P.D. I wrote off to 2 or 3 of the girls' schools asking whether there was any position available in senior English, and that's how I got to P.G.C.
- M.H. And you taught senior English there?
- P.D. Yes.
- M.H. How long did you do that for?
- P.D. Three years.
- M.H. That was when you got married after that, is that right?
- P.D. Well at the end of that three years I really had intended to go to Melbourne and do a short course in education. Here you couldn't do a diploma of education under about three years I think it was. It was quite a long course, where as in Melbourne they had a one year Diploma of Education and I planned to do that. So I left P.G.C. then, with the idea of going to Melbourne to do this short course, but I had a short illness just at the wrong time and I couldn't get over to Melbourne and then I got engaged during the year and married at the end of the year.

- M.H. That's interesting. Did you feel that you were making a choice then, not to do your education course, or how did that feel?
- P.D. Well, it was really too late. You know, I couldn't have done the Melbourne course then, because I had missed the beginning of the course and I couldn't have put off my marriage. You see, I married a man older than myself who was a widower and I couldn't have expected him to be sitting round waiting while I did a diploma of education. I wouldn't have been interested to have done so. I was quite happy and ready to change direction.
- M.H. That is interesting. Just some questions about that sort of thing, about marriage and work. I think one of the questions here suggests that if you are entering the work force and you have some sense of wanting to develop a career then that might clash with the choice of marriage. Do you think that graduates found that they needed to postpone their thoughts of marriage if they wanted to develop a career?
- P.D. I think in those days you would need to have been extremely keen about your career to have postponed marriage, or put it aside altogether. I think in those days the alternative was pretty clear - career or marriage. I think we regarded marriage more or less as a career. We didn't see into the far distance when the children would have been grown up and we would have felt left out. I think it seemed a pretty clear alternative in that time. Either you had a career or you had marriage.
- M.H. And you were saying you were ready to change direction when you decided to get married.
- P.D. Yes.
- M.H. I wonder if in fact, that "either-or" thing could be a frustrating experience if you weren't ready to change direction.
- P.D. I think it would have been, but in my own case, this is perhaps rather a personal remark about my own feelings, but I was an extremely maternal kind of youngster even, and to me one of the greatest disappointments in life would have been not to have had children of my own, do you see? So in that case, marriage and home-making was a very attractive alternative.
- M.H. Surely.
- P.D. So that I wouldn't have felt frustrated then. I think for a woman in that position, the frustrating time comes much later on when the children are independent and you are still hole and hearty, and *hate* you feel that you would like to have taken up something. And I think it is marvellous now, the number of older women who are going back to academic work and enjoying it. It really thrills

- P.D. me, I think it is wonderful that they can do it. I'm full of envy (laughs).
- M.H. While you were working, did you feel that you faced any particular difficulties because you were a woman?
- P.D. No, you see I was teaching in a girls' school so that I wouldn't have faced that kind of problem that a woman in a mixed group would face.
- M.H. What sort of problems do you think they might encounter?
- P.D. Well I certainly think that some of my friends who taught in the Education Department would have faced problems of discrimination. I know they had years and years of struggle to get equal pay. That would have really dominated their lives, I think, and would have mine, if I had been in the Education Department, but you see the question of salary didn't arise because I was with a group of women in a girls' school.
- M.H. And at the university you were probably receiving the same salary as a man.
- P.D. I think so. I never questioned that. I don't think it ever occurred to me that if I had been a man the 200 pounds might have been 250. I don't think it occurred to me.
- M.H. What about working with male colleagues? Did you ever feel there was ...?
- P.D. No, no difficulty. The male colleagues that I worked with then in that one year at the university were so few. The English school was so small and I had quite a happy relationship with the other people on the staff, quite happy. No, I really must say that personally, I have never felt this discrimination, but I know other people have and I feel very strongly in principle about it, but, personally, I haven't suffered at all ... except with frightful arguments with my older brother, about equal pay, of course (laughs).
- M.H. Oh! Tell me about that.
- P.D. We were great friends, he was three years older than I and he didn't think that women ought to have equal pay because men supported a wife and children and so on and so forth. Oh, we had terrific arguments, but that was just in the home.
- M.H. It must have been quite a lively home environment.
- P.D. It was a very lively home. It really was a marvellously lively home. Of course my father was a highly

- P.D. intellectual person. I think I told you he had a first class honours philosophy degree and he had a glorious sense of humour. Our meal-times were really something to look forward to, although my mother used to complain that we all wanted to talk and no-one wanted to listen (laugh).
- M.H. How old were you when you married?
- P.D. 26.
- M.H. Your husband was a doctor?
- P.D. Yes, he was a general surgeon with a very, very busy practice and no partner, of course. It meant that one's life was really very, very busy, because you never left the telephone unattended - never. You had competent help of course, but one had to be on and one off all the time. Many's the time when my helper was out and I perhaps had the baby in the bath and the phone would go and I would pick the baby up, wrap him in a towel and rush to answer the phone. This went on continually.
- M.H. So, in fact, you did have a sort of job of work to do as well as being a mother.
- P.D. Oh, very much so, very much so, yes. There was never a dull moment in our home. We had a big garden too and a property with our own cow and chookies. I did an enormous amount of fruit preserving and butter-making and all that sort of thing.
- M.H. During that time did you ever think about the possibility of working again?
- P.D. No, not then, not then. I did very much later, after the children were grown and I was in middle life, I suppose I used to think, 'Oh, I'd love to take up teaching again', because I had enjoyed teaching very much, but I didn't do anything about it. I don't know if I could have. But I think it would have meant, perhaps, doing a refresher course and then also you have to remember that I had never done an actual training in teaching. I had gone to P.G.C. as an untrained person so I think it would have been more difficult to get back into the work force as a teacher by that time. I would have to have done some training, I guess.
- M.H. You mentioned that most of your friendships at the university were lasting ones. Did you manage to keep them up after your marriage, or did you come back to them in later life?
- P.D. Just one or two I managed to keep going, so to speak, but I think in later life it is easier to pick up, probably, when you are not quite so busy.
- M.H. What about social activities after you were married. You were mentioning that it is easier to pick those sorts of friendships up later perhaps, but you were

M.H. involved in a lot of, if not social activities, social work kind of activities?.

Womans
P.D. Yes, I think some of my dearest friendships were developed with those activities. I was a very keen supporter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The interesting thing is that I was attracted to them in my early married life, chiefly through their very strong social conscience. I was in sympathy with them over their total abstinence programme, and still am, but I was also tremendously attracted to their social involvement in all sorts of problems. They, for instance, were one of the few groups that were the least bit interested in justice for the Aborigines and that appealed to me very much. Because of my husband's interest. And then of course, the League of Women Voters, as it became - it had been Women's Non-Party. That was a group of women who were of course, completely devoted to equal status for women. That attracted me. They also, of course, were involved in all sorts of important political matters - non-party political. So some of my dearest friendships developed with those groups.

M.H. And there was also the Children's Welfare Department.

P.D. Oh yes. That became a very big thing in my life. Just at the end of the war I was appointed a member of what was then the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Board. It was an executive government board. The Chairman and the Secretary were public servants, but the eight members of the board, four men and four women, were voluntary people, picked from the community, so to speak. I found that very rewarding work and I was on that board for twenty-one years.

M.H. That's a very long time.

P.D. Yes, it was a long time. I think too long (laugh) ... not from my point of view too long. I enjoyed every bit of it, but I think when we were disbanded, when the Labor Government came in, they decided they didn't want a government executive board, that they wanted the whole department to be answerable to the Minister, you see, so this board that I had been on was disbanded. When I said "too long" ... they thought it was too long (laugh).

M.H. Although you weren't involved in paid work after you were married you were certainly involved in a lot of voluntary work.

P.D. Yes, a great deal.

M.H. Perhaps you could say it was almost a career in itself because you were certainly following through your interests and doing your own thing.

P.D. Yes, this is quite true. I did an enormous amount of small public speaking ... you know, Mothers' Clubs, church groups and youth clubs and all that sort of thing. I did a great deal of speaking on

- P.D. various subjects.. Things like 'Equal Status of Women', 'Justice for Aborigines', and all sorts of things.
- M.H. Did your husband support you in all this?
- P.D. Very much so, very much so. Yes. In fact he rather pushed me. Sometimes when I wanted to sit back he's sort of urge me on.
- M.H. One of the things that you mentioned before when you decided to do English was that you feel that it would have more lasting use and meaning for you. There is a question here about whether having a degree contributed to your family life: Do you think you could ...
- P.D. To my children and so on?
- M.H. Well, did you feel as though it was a contribution to you as a wife and mother?
- P.D. Oh I think so, very much so. For one thing, you see, it encourages in you the habit of studying and thinking about what you read and so on. Naturally you enter into your children's lives in a different way. Oh yes, I would think that three or four years of study, whether you took a degree or not, would really make a lot of difference.
- M.H. What about your relationship with your husband? Would it have extended that in any way?
- P.D. Oh yes, I think so, because (laugh) I think he might laugh about this, but I think he would agree. You see the course I did was a highly critical one, just as a law degree is. I think when you are studying English literature, you have to be awfully analytical and critical and I think it has meant that in any work he has done - he's written some books, you know, and he has done a tremendous lot of article writing and correspondence and that, and we have never either of us, done this sort of thing without submitting it to the other and having a little bit of helpful criticism. So I would say undoubtedly the kind of work I did has helped in our partnership.
- M.H. You have written articles and things as well as your public speaking?
- P.D. Yes, just for magazines and odd things. Nothing at all spectacular. And I have also greatly enjoyed writing a lot of unimportant verse.
- M.H. How lovely.
- P.D. Nothing very important, but ... you know, occasional things for the children's birthdays. The grandchildren don't think a gift's a gift, unless it has a little funny verse with it. That's been one of my hobbies.

END OF SIDE ONE (A)

Side Two (B)

- P.D. Professor Leonie Kramer made a comment which impressed me, some time ago. You see, and she was talking about women taking degrees, then doing absolutely nothing with them and she said "particularly those women who have done well and have been at the university at public expense, and who then just fade out and don't do a thing." And I thought, "Oh dear, that's me." Because I was at the university with a bursary and then did nothing as far as using that in later life except in my own personal life of course. So she made me feel very guilty. She feels quite strongly about this, that women graduates should be very active.
- M.H. That wasn't something that you thought originally, that you ought to be repaying the public?
- P.D. Not at all, no. She gave me quite a start and that is only a few years back. No, I felt quite confident that I was doing what I was supposed to be doing, you know?
- M.H. This is the final question. They are fairly general sort of retrospective questions. They tend to be rather large. They are a bit hard to answer, but we might refine them after I ask them. What do you think were some of the most important influences on your life and the choices that you made?
- P.D. You mean preparatory to going to the university do you?
- M.H. Oh no, this is a general question - it's not tied to the university. You might feel that going to the university in fact was an important influence on your life. I mean it's broad - a broad question.
- P.D. A very difficult question to answer shortly, because it really involves your family life - the kind of family you were brought up in, don't you think?
- M.H. Well, I am sure it could do.
- P.D. Yes ... both my father and my mother had a very strong influence on my life ... and in very different ways. My father and I were always very close, and I think this is an important thing in a woman's life, if she has a happy, close relationship with her father. I always think that is quite an important influence. Some people have it more than others and I was very close to my father and ... my talks with him, on various subjects you see, would have directed my outlook a good deal, I think. Mother was so different and yet she had an equally strong influence. My parents came from such totally different backgrounds, which is rather an interesting merging kind of thing, isn't it?

- P.D. My father's father came from Kent. He and his father belonged to the yeomen of Kent, whatever a yeomen exactly is, but they were farming people, you see, and lived a very hard life in Victoria in early pioneering days. I think I told you, he had to leave school at 10. He was one of 13 children, and my darling grandmother was married at 16. That's how she managed to have 13 children. She was a lovely person - I was very fond of her. Then my mother, you see, came from such a different background. She was born at Ballarat; she was one of 8 children. Her father became a wealthy man, a leading man in the stock exchange in Melbourne and they had a lovely home in Toorak. She was brought up so differently. And there were both these influences in our family life. My father, of course, was a leading Minister in the Methodist Church, and I still remember some of his outstanding sermons at Kent Town Methodist Church - he really was a very, very fine preacher. Not only his daughter says that, you know (laugh), but in the Methodist Church they would tell you that, and he was actually chosen to be the speaker in the 1936 celebrations of the centenary year. He gave the official address down at Adelaide Oval. This supports my claim that he was a very fine preacher. I do think that those sermons I heard Sunday after Sunday, as a child, would have a very strong influence on my out look.
- M.H. What about the university and the friendships formed at university. Do you think that they had any influence on you, or your studies ... what you learnt, had any influence on you, or do you think it had all been set in the family background?
- P.D. I don't think it was more than an expanding influence. A most happy experience, but I don't think that there would have been any strong, specially strong influence or change of direction. It would have been an enlarging experience more than anything else. I think any changes in point of view and attitude, changes from my childhood and girlhood days, would have come more in later life, with later experience of living in the world, not just studies and having a grand time, as I did (laugh).
- M.H. Would some of those things have been your involvement in things like the League of Women Voters?
- P.D. Oh yes undoubtedly ... and my experience on the Children's Welfare Board. Until I came into contact with some of the terribly disadvantaged children from bad homes and so on, I had no idea what nasty things went on in this world. Well none of that would be apparent in university days. It was, in those days, it was a fairly secluded kind of life, I think, university life. Much more so than now.
- M.H. I was going to say it sounds as though it was fairly sheltered.

- P.D. Much more so. In fact I remember one very close friend of mine at the university, and I were talking about some political matter and we said really we didn't know what was going on, we were hardly fit to vote! See, of course, voting wasn't then till we were twenty-one, but we just came into the voting time and we just really didn't bother, particularly about local matters. The very matters you think you ought to be involved in, we weren't. We were terribly interested in The League of Nations and their desire for peace and so on, because we had known the First World War, although we were young, brothers had been killed and been away and all this sort of thing. So we were tremendously involved in The League of Nations and in world matters but as for politics, I think many of us wouldn't have known who was Premier.
- M.H. And so The League of Women Voters would have been a very important educative experience for you?
- P.D. Very yes. You are quite right - it certainly was, but I didn't join that, of course, until some time after I was married. I didn't know anything about it when I was at the university. Somehow, university days at that time, as far as I was concerned, were sort of rather shut off. You did your best and did what you thought you ought to be doing, but you didn't worry much about outside things.
- M.H. How do you think your experience compares with that of women students or women teachers today?
- P.D. Do you mean my experience at the university, or my experience of life, or ...?
- M.H. Well, I was just pondering that. I hadn't seen the question in quite that way before. Perhaps we could think of it in two stages ... as a student and I think you started to mention that you feel it was much more secluded than for people today. Then what about the difference between women students in your day and women students today?
- P.D. It is rather difficult for me, because I don't know the women students of today.
- M.H. Do you have any feeling about what the differences might be? Whether they have more chances, less chances, those kinds of things?
- P.D. You are asking me about differences in outlook really, are you?
- M.H. Outlook and opportunity, I think.
- P.D. I see what you mean. Well one big difference is of course, that we had a sense of complete security as far as employment went. Although we were not well paid and our choice of jobs was pretty limited, we were sure of it. I think that must be simply horrifying now - students, doing a really first class course and then feeling, 'Now how am

- P.D. I going to use this?' I think that is the biggest difference and a most unhappy difference for the present. On the other hand, whereas we, I think, most of us had no sense of achieving anything very great, because the men did all that, nowadays, you see, women can look forward to going to the very top of the tree in a chosen field, and I don't think we did. We took for granted that we wouldn't get the chance. So I think that is a big difference - that they've got the horrible feeling, on one side, that they won't perhaps, make the grade at all, and, on the other hand they have got the possibility of going to the very top.
- M.H. That's a very interesting way of summing it up. It makes a lot of sense to me. And what about a teacher? Your experience was in the university for a year and then in an all-girls school - but you think the experience of women teachers to-day is different from your day?
- P.D. Oh I should think it is very different, from what I hear. Of course I don't know anything about it at first hand, except that my daughter is a teacher. In some ways there are many more opportunities for the teacher to-day. For instance, she has been doing very fascinating work with Vietnamese children. The whole area of education is so much wider now, that teachers do have interests that we hadn't. I think that is one very big difference that our society is so very, very different, that teaching is much less limited.
- M.H. It is hard to answer those comparative questions when we are not just talking about change in women's positions, but change in the whole way of life.
- P.D. Yes ... Another thing too is, I think, there is a very much stronger sense of union amongst teachers now. They are a strong body, whereas I think teachers in our day were more isolated. If you weren't happy in a school in those days, it was difficult.
- M.H. What about the general life experience and life choices? Do you think that your experience in that way would be very different from a woman starting off as a student at university to-day?
- P.D. Oh yes. Very much more limited. Because the careers open to women were fewer, for one thing. The feeling that it was one thing or the other was very strong. It was career or marriage, unless you were doing medicine. I think some of the medical students ... unless they had some hope of practising medicine, they wouldn't have been bothered with six long years. So I think the medical students felt that they would be practising and many of them were able to marry and combine practice with marriage. But on the whole, the

- P.D. choice I think, was pretty well accepted, ... so that you didn't feel that a career was necessarily opening up from a university degree.
- M.H. I think from what you have said that your generation of women students wouldn't have seen yourselves as trail blazers or pioneers. It was a fairly accepted tradition that you had gone to the university. I mean, you were saying that some people might have thought it wasn't of great use to a girl but it wasn't an unconventional or extraordinary thing to do.
- P.D. No.
- M.H. So how would you characterize your generation of students? How do you think you saw yourselves?
- P.D. I think your question is 'Did we see ourselves as blue-stockings or trail blazers?' Is that what you mean?
- M.H. Yes. At least no, I don't think you did, but what did you see yourselves as?
- P.D. I think we saw ourselves as a very happy, privileged group of women. We had plenty of self-confidence, we thought well of ourselves, but we didn't regard ourselves as pioneers or trail blazers, because that had been done already. I think in some ways, perhaps, we settled down to enjoy ourselves, and did so. I don't think that's a very good answer to your question (laugh).
- M.H. I think that makes a lot of sense.
- P.D. In some ways I am speaking for myself, aren't I, and for the Arts group and the Law group of students. There were no women Engineers, of course. There were Science students, but no Engineers. We regarded the Engineers as rather a rough crowd (laugh). There were Dental students, I remember. Do you know the name Win Preedy?
- M.H. No.
- P.D. She was a Dental student and graduate. I haven't seen anything of her for years, but we all came down to The Cottage.
- M.H. It certainly seems as though The Cottage was a focal point.
- P.D. It was marvellous. Yes, it really was. It was a lovely place. I think in some ways something was lost when the Lady Symon building was built and the little old Cottage wasn't used. But this happens, you have to have it when numbers grow. We knew all the professors by sight, every faculty. We didn't know them all personally, of course, but you knew them as they walked up and down. Some of the people who have become quite famous were common figures, walking up and down past the Mitchell

P.D. Building ... Mark Oliphant, and Russell Crocker ... Walter Crocker he calls himself now, but he was always Russell Crocker, in those days, I don't know why. I haven't answered your question very well, you know, about how we saw ourselves.

M.H. Well, it certainly makes sense to me, but if you want to add anything.

P.D. We were very conscientious. I think that what I said about seeing ourselves as a happy, privileged group, I think we realised that and I think we were pretty responsible. I don't think people cut lectures much, or did what they shouldn't do. I think we were a pretty responsible crowd. I think that if we did have a sense of privilege, as I think we must have, you know, with university not being free, I think that sense of responsibility came with it. There was no Barr Smith Library of course. We had to study either in the little old upstairs library, or else in the public library, and that's where some of your best friendships were made in spite of being told not to talk in the library (laugh) ... you know, we used to meet there. They were very happy days.

M.H. I think I have asked all the questions that I want to ask. Is there anything that you would like to add, or any gaps that you feel have been left?

P.D. No, except that there is one thing that I might mention. We had a women's union, you know, long before there was a general union, university union, we had a women's union and its rather interesting that we always had a woman graduate as president. We always had a fairly recent graduate, and so I would have come into contact a little bit with some of the women graduates then when I was a student, and I was a member of the women's union. There was always a woman graduate who would be president of the union. I can remember one or two of them. *Thou* it was rather interesting that later on, after I had been married a few years, I was appointed president of the women's union. You see, I was then a youngish graduate, and that was the tradition. So thinking back, you knew, when I said I really hadn't had much contact with the women graduates when I was a student, but there was that contact always.

M.H. Did most women belong to the women's union?

P.D. Yes, oh yes.

M.H. What was its intention?

P.D. Well I suppose the Cottage was its home, and we maintained the Cottage, and we met there ... we had all our committee meetings and our debating societies there. I suppose that was its purpose,

- P.D. really, to support each other. But all the men had at that time was what they called their sports union. That was all.
- M.H. It is interesting that the women decided to form a union for themselves, rather, or before, a general students' union.
- P.D. That's right. Yes, it was long, long, before that we had our own union. Soon after I was president of the women's union they decided to have an undergraduate and that was a very good thing, their own undergraduate woman president. I think Roxy Byrne who was Roxy Sims then, was one of the first undergraduate presidents of the women's union. She could tell you a lot more about the days just after me. I don't know whether she's one of the people being ...
- M.H. I've no idea.
- P.D. No, I suppose too young. Probably too young, I think. I don't think that - I feel there's quite a gap there in my memory of the women graduates in those early days. Interesting isn't it?
- M.H. It possibly just means that they didn't figure very largely in your life.
- P.D. Of course I had moved right away from the academic field. This would partly account for it and probably most of the women in the women graduates would still have been in the academic field, either teaching or continuing the career they had, whatever it was, and probably this would be one reason why I moved away.
- M.H. Certainly its concerns would have been for women involved in academic work.
- P.D. That's right. Academic concerns more, where I had moved out more to concerns in the larger world, and also I had a very full life as you can imagine.
- M.H. Is there anything else?
- P.D. I am better at answering your questions than thinking (laugh).
- M.H. Well I have come to the end of my questions.

Interviewer's Report. Mrs. Duguid.

Preliminary Interview 11/8/82. One hour

Father's Occupation: Methodist minister, Kent Town. Later Theological College, Adelaide.

Mother's Occupation: Never worked.

Maiden Name: Lade.

Siblings: 3 sisters, two brothers. Third born.

School: Poltoonga (Miss Hendersons^m) MLC, 1916-1921

University course: 1921-1925. Honours Classics. 1 year. Then transferred to Honours English.

Father's education: Tertiary. Melbourne Univ. First Class Hons. Philosophy.

Mother's education: as a "lady" - painting and music. No tertiary.

Siblings education: Both brothers university. Older sister, part time univ., worked in business. Other sisters: ¹nursing, ²university and teaching.

Husband's occupation: Doctor (tertiary education)

Career: Tutor at university. 1 year. Teacher at PGC. No paid employment after marriage, but was on board of Children's Welfare Dept for 21 years. Also on board of YWCA and member of League of Women Voters. Also assisted in running of husband's medical practice.

AFUW Membership: member but not actively involved except in Status of Women committee which was set up many years after she left univ.

Nb: family from Victoria. Came to Adelaide when Mrs. Duguid was about 6 years. Father's family from country (not wealthy), Mother's lived in Toorak. Her father a wealthy stockbroker who had made money in Ballarat.

Taped Interview 13/8/82. Length of tape: approx. 1 hour. Time: 12 hrs

Clear distinction between career and marriage

Exploration of feminism - seems to ~~be~~ come out of family background, rather than political environment at university.

Clearly felt lack of "career" when children had grown up

Nb. Mrs Duguid expressed interest in writing down her memories of The Cottage. I encouraged her to do this & she thought she would get together with a friend & go over their memories.