

ANDREW ALLEN'S INTERVIEW WITH MARGARET TEMPLEMAN ON WEDNESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2010

AA Margaret, can I get your full name please.

MT Margaret Frances Templeman.

AA Can I ask what your parents' names were?

MT Douglas George and Amelia May.

AA You were born in Campbelltown.

MT Actually, I was born in Crown Street Women's Hospital, but we lived in Campbelltown at the time.

AA How many were in your family?

MT There were eight children.

AA Where exactly in Campbelltown did you live?

MT We lived in Worrall Park. We had a farm there and the house was where the football ground is now.

AA Is the house still standing?

MT No, that is long gone.

AA Can you describe a little bit about the house that you lived in?

MT It had four bedrooms and a kitchen that had an alleyway between the kitchen and the house because the house was very old. In those early days the kitchen was apart from the house because of the danger of fire. They were frightened that if the kitchen caught fire, then the house would catch fire also.

AA So the house was where Worrall Park is today. Were there many houses around?

MT No. There were a few farms around us in Junction Road and Georges River Road. These houses were literally in the bush with cart tracks leading to them.

I went to school in East Campbelltown in Junction Road. There is a house there now but it was a school then.

5 mins

AA Georges River Road back then, was it in the same position as today.

MT It is roughly the same.

AA Right, because I think that Colonial Street replaces a section of Georges River Road.

MT They might have straightened it a little bit, but it is roughly the same.

AA Do you remember the water tank along Georges River Road?

MT Yes, I remember that. We used to go to high school at Liverpool and we had to ride our bikes into the station. Coming home on a hot summer's day we used to sit up there and have a bit of a swim. That was the town supply, but I don't think we were the only ones.

AA Where did your father work?

MT He was a farmer most of his life. The farm folded during the depression years, but we struggled on as best we could until the war. He then worked for Manpower I think it was called, in the army in Moorebank. I don't know what he was doing, he never did say.

AA Can you describe the sort of food that you ate as a child?

MT Mostly home grown. If the cow had a bull calf, when it grew it up a bit we would kill that and share it with the neighbours who were in the same situation as us. There was no refrigeration then. We would share with the neighbours and they would with us. We would have chooks and rabbits from the creek. We were a lot better off than a lot of people.

AA What about the sort of games that you played as a child?

MT We would play ordinary games such as tops, rope skipping, cricket, races, rounders, tennis and we would swim a lot in the Georges River at the elbow. My nieces and nephews were down there not so long ago and they took photos and showed me. It's nowhere near as nice as when we were young. The sand isn't there anymore.

AA Were your parents very strict and how did they discipline you?

MT I don't know that they were that strict. We didn't think to disobey them. My father was the quietest gentlest man. He never raised his voice, but he would look over the top of his glasses and we would shrivel up. Our parents were very good to us.

10 mins

AA You have already answered where you went to school. How did you get there?

MT In 1912, my grandfather came out from England and he met his wife on the boat and they got married. They lived at Macdonaldtown for a time, then Bringelly and then they bought the farm at Kentlyn. They used to grow a lot of crops for the Government before the Government had their own experimental farms.

AA Do you remember how many children were in the classroom at school?

MT It was a two room school and there were three grades 1st/2nd/3rd and 4th/5th/6th and I don't suppose there would have been more than half a dozen in any one class.

AA Did you have any favourite teachers?

MT Yes, we had a very young teacher only about 16 or 17 at the time straight out of college. She loved music and she taught us all the songs from The Mikado and that type of thing and I absolutely loved it. I thought she was heaven.

AA Was there strict discipline at school?

MT Yes, the teachers were very strict. Never about being late, I think that they understood that farm kids had things to do before they got to school. A lot of us were late, but we never got into trouble for it.

AA How old were you when you left school?

MT I wasn't quite 16.

AA Did you go to work straight after that?

MT No. I went to Manpower and when I was 17 I took up nursing.

AA How did you like that?

MT Very much.

AA Do you remember how much you got paid when you started nursing?

MT It was just under three pounds a week I think. We lived at the hospital in those days and came home on our days off. I can't remember how much board they took from us. It was very difficult then, as shoes would cost 7/6d which was a lot when you were earning less than three pounds.

AA What were your bosses and workmates like?

MT We were all pretty much the same. We were all new to the job and we all came from poor families and had no money. We all got along very well.

AA How long were you in nursing?

MT About three years.

AA What did you do in your spare time?

MT When we were at home we had the gramophone and the radio. We would sit by the fire and do our embroidery and we would sing along with the sing-along shows and listen to the serials on the radio.

When we were nursing, we didn't have much money to go out. They had a recreation room and we would all go up there and the local boys would come up

The Air Force was over in Camden and they would come over and pick us up on a Friday and we would play darts and ping pong. Those nights were good. We would go to the pictures and the local dances. We would go swimming in the daytime and go into "town" for the day and things like that.

15 mins

AA You were never bored like the kids today.

MT No, we had too much to do. We worked 48 hours a week, not like the 38 hours today and then we had to study in our spare time. When I was nursing we had study and lectures in our spare time after those hours. We were tied down.

AA When you were younger, did your parents have a car?

MT No. We had a horse and sulky like most people in those days and then cars came gradually onto the scene.

AA How did you meet your partner?

MT We met at a New Years Eve ball.

AA How did you feel about him? Was it love at first sight?

MT No, it was nothing like that.

AA Where were you married?

MT At the Church of England in Campbelltown. All my children were christened there.

AA Where did you go for your honeymoon?

MT We went to Orange.

AA How many children did you have?

MT Five.

AA Did you both have the same ideas about bringing up children?

MT I suppose we did. We never fought over the kids. We agreed to what they wanted.

AA Can you tell me what you remember about the depression years?

MT Not really. I was very young. I can remember my mother had one good dress and if she went anywhere, the moment she came home she took it off. It had to last her a long time. Now looking back, I can remember those same women in those same dresses for years.

AA What sort of things do you remember about the Second World War?

MT Again, I was younger. I was about 16 when it was finished. I heard the war was over at the local sandwich shop. I used to go and get the lunches. I came back, I didn't get the sandwiches, and said "The War's over. I've had this place, I'm going home." They wouldn't believe me. I was telling them to put the radio on. They put it on and then they all left.

AA Do you remember the blackouts?

MT Oh yes, we all had to have blackout curtains. My father was a warden and he was expected to go around and see that everyone had their curtains up. He said "blow that, I have too far to go". I can remember my brother who was younger than me digging a trench and my mother said "What's that for Ron, is that trench for me" and he said "no, that's for me and Tiger." Tiger was his dog. The war didn't really touch us and we were too young to notice it anyway.

20 mins

AA You had no family that was involved in the war.

MT My two older brothers were both in the army.

AA What are your memories of Campbelltown as a child?

MT The earliest memories are Lack's Hotel and there were the barbers and then the paper shop and milk bar, a chemist and then dining rooms which was really a café. Then there was a triple fronted shop selling haberdashery and shoes. There was Lowes and a sawmill just down the road. There was a tent maker. Then there was a fruit shop, and then there were houses, Bursills

grocery then more houses. There was a butcher on the other corner and nothing then until the Town Hall.

Going back down the other side of the street there was a chemist. There was Bussell's on the corner of Lithgow Street and the Club Hotel on the corner of Cordeaux Street. There weren't many shops on that side of the road, it was mainly houses.

My mother and her sister worked at the Club Hotel, which was how she met my father. The hotel had a high wall around it then, she said and a great huge gate, and you had to get permission to go out at night. Things have changed!

AA What was opposite Tripp's Garage on the corner of Dumaresq and Queen Streets when you were young?

MT There were houses along there. The Buffalo Hall was along there. I don't know what they call that now. It was the Order of something Buffalos. Where all the parking is at the back of the shops was all houses.

AA Was it just a lane that went from the end of Dumaresq Street?

MT Dumaresq Street just ended up in a dirt lane. There were houses up there past the old water reservoir.

25 mins

AA Going down towards the railway, was that a dirt lane?

MT There were all houses all down there too, except right down there near the railway. Winton had his smallgoods place and there was the snooker room and the pub.

AA Do you remember the water tanks when they had the reservoir in Allman Street?

MT No, I don't really remember. We really didn't go that way. We came to town to do the shopping and that was just about it. I can remember the Barn Restaurant that was the coach house. I can remember the house in front of that. My mother used to sit there.

AA Leumeah House do you mean?

MT I can't remember the name of it. It was in front of the barn.

AA I think that is what you are referring to. It was demolished in the 60s.

MT The kitchen was huge; it had a table that seated 12. There were cupboards around the walls, plus this huge stove. Well to my eyes it was huge as I was

terribly young. And so was the lounge room. You weren't allowed to touch anything in that lounge room, not a thing.

AA Do you remember Kentlyn?

MT Yes, I remember Kentlyn. I remember the dance hall there. I learned to dance there. I used to have Sunday School there. We used to swim at Freres and the Elbow. Of course in those days we had to walk everywhere. We didn't have cars. We had our bikes, but we mostly walked.

AA Did you ever travel on the train Pansy between Campbelltown and Camden?

MT I remember Pansy. When I was first married I lived here for a few years and Pansy was running then. I remember one time when I was first nursing, it was raining and Pansy couldn't get up the Kenny Hill, it couldn't get any traction.