

ANDREW ALLEN'S ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW AT THE H J DALEY LIBRARY WITH MAUREEN PATRICK ON 13 AUGUST 2014

AA Can I have your full name please?

MP I was born Maureen Patrick in 1936, a long time ago.

AA Can you tell me whereabouts you were born?

MP I was born in a little country town called Cowra in the central west on 12 December 1936.

AA How long did you live in Cowra?

MP My parents and grandparents came from around that area. We didn't actually live in Cowra. My mum and dad lived in a little place called Koorawatha and my grandparents lived in Wattamondara. We lived independently, my brother and me with my grandparents until my dad got a job. It was during the depression and he was on the dole.

It is funny when I look back on it now, what was happening then is happening now. Although he was on the dole, he had to work for it. His main job was digging up thistles from properties around the place and he had to report to the Police Station to do it. They would then go and do their day's work and report back to the Police Station to collect the actual dole. There wasn't a Centrelink or anything like that. I don't know how long he did that for but he eventually got a job on the New South Wales Railways. Again it wasn't where he lived, he got sent away to do the job. He was sent to a little place called Ivanhoe which was near Broken Hill. That left Mum and my brother and I. I can't remember if we moved in with my grandparents, I think we might have. I don't know how often he came home, if it was once a week or once a fortnight. I can remember Wattamondara really well, but I can't really remember Koorawatha.

My grandfather worked on the railway too, but he was stationed in Wattamondara and I remember lots of things about "Watta" as they called it. It is just a small country town outside of Cowra. Cowra was the main town where my brother and I were born.

AA How old were you when you left that area?

MP When we were in Wattamondara I was only about three. I can remember my grandmother had a cow and we had to separate the milk and there was a big almond tree in the backyard.

5 mins

We left there. Every time my father got, I suppose it was a promotion, he was transferred and we went from Cowra to a place that wasn't a place. It was a railway siding built on a sheep station called Benneranbah. It was out near Hay. This time he took Mum and us with him. I don't remember how long we were there. From there we went to a tiny little place called Leadville, between Coolah and Dunedoo. That's where I started school, so I must have been about five.

AA I was going to ask if you were around when the Cowra breakout happened, but you would have been gone before that.

MP We were gone from Leadville. I can remember Leadville. We were then in a place called Tanyinna. There were gates across the railway line that had to be opened to let the traffic across. My mother got the job of the opening the gates, my dad was still on the railways. At Tanyinna there was one house, that was the house we lived in and other people, mainly men, there was another woman at one stage lived in tents. Because dad had the family and mum was the gatekeeper we got the house.

That's when the Cowra breakout happened, when we were there. My brother and I used to sleep in the same room and I don't know where he got it from, but he had a bayonet and he used to sleep with that under his pillow. He told me that Cowra was just across the hill and they could come in any time. I was terrified there for a while. He told me I was safe because he had this bayonet.

By this time my second brother was born. He was born in Dunedoo before we left Leadville. We used to have to go to school at Bethungra which is on the way to Junee. Tanyinna gates was between Junee and Cootamundra.

AA I thought I had heard of most of New South Wales country towns but these are places I haven't heard of.

MP I think they are still there in some shape or form. I don't know about the place on the property, Benneranbah. It probably wouldn't be there now, or there could be a town there. We had to do all our shopping in Griffith. There was another guy who lived in the same area who had a car. I can remember the car, it had a little dicky seat in the back and my brother and I would sit in the dicky seat, Mum and Dad in the front. My brother and I had to ride to Bethungra from Tanyinna which was 4 miles there and 4 miles back. I was only about seven. We used to go off down the gravel road. It is probably tarred now. It was quite a busy road with traffic going from Cootamundra to

Junee and it was Mum's job to let the traffic through. You couldn't leave the gates open permanently. They had to be closed all the time. That was 24 hours a day.

Mum had the two of us and my toddler brother. She had another baby when she was there. When she had the fourth baby, my sister Gail, they condescended and gave her a male porter to do the night shift for a certain time until the baby grew up a little bit. He used to sleep in a tent in the back yard and get up and open the gates during the night time. My brother and I used to do it during the day. We would have a great time, people used to give us money. When they would come, we would run out and open the gates, we probably shouldn't have done it, and people would toss out a penny or threepence, it was great fun. If my mother had been found out, she probably would have been in trouble.

10 mins

MP We had those Commonwealth money boxes, you probably wouldn't remember them. They were the shape and looked like the Commonwealth Bank in Sydney and made out of tin. We had them all lined up. We didn't go anywhere to spend the money, we only went to school. We went into Cootamundra occasionally. We had all these money boxes filled with pennies and threepences; sometimes they would throw us sixpences, that was good.

AA I think that Bryan Chrystal had the same sort of story when I interviewed him.

MP He lived right next to the railway gates too. My brother and I were educated in a one room school at Bethungra that was the whole school. There were only a couple of kids in each class. I loved school, I thought it was great. We had blackboards all around the room. Each class had one blackboard. We only had one male teacher. When we got in in the morning our blackboards would be full with all our work. During the day he would come along and have a talk and see what we were doing. My brother used to call me a smartie because I used to do my blackboard and go on to the next and do as much as I could. I used to think it was great. We ended up quite intelligent, so apparently it didn't do us any harm.

AA How old were you when you moved to Campbelltown? What is the story with that?

MP From Tanyinna we went to Molong. From Molong we came to Campbelltown and I would have been 10 or 11 and I was in sixth class. Dad wasn't appointed to Campbelltown as part of his job, he was appointed to Werris Creek. That's when my mother finally objected and said she wasn't going. My eldest brother Vernon was due for high school and I was only six months away from high school and the other little fellow was due to start school. She

said that the kids have been in and out of schools ever since they started. So because my father's parents and one of his brothers was living in Campbelltown, he decided to leave us in Campbelltown and he would go to Werris Creek. It was all promotions. Every time he moved, he was promoted, but my mother had had enough. They rented this little house in Lithgow Street and that's where we stayed. Because his parents and married brother were there, he knew we would be alright. He used to come home on Friday night and go back on Sunday night. I don't know how long he would have been in Werris Creek, I was working so I would have been 15 and my brother was 18 months older than me. It would have been 4 or 5 years without him being there. I know the boys were a handful for my mother sometimes and she had to call on my grandfather a couple of times to come down and pull them into line.

15 mins

My father did that until he got his next promotion which was a Sub Inspector and he was appointed permanently in an office job at one of the city stations, I think it was Petersham. He was finally home all the time and went off to work from 9 to 5. By then he was a Sub Inspector and wasn't doing the hard yards any more.

I often think of my mother and the life that she had to lead even before we got to the stage where dad wasn't home all week. When we were in Tanyinna, we lived in a house without running water or electricity. She had my older brother and I, a toddler and a new born baby and looked after railway gates at the same time. She had a funny life. There wouldn't be many women go through what she went through.

AA Did she live to a good age?

MP Yes, she lived till she was 88. By then she had all the luxuries, nice home, nice car and everything she deserved. She never seemed to complain, she was a happy woman. She was a good mother; I don't know how she did it.

AA What number in Lithgow Street did you live?

MP I think it was 7. There was another house on the Queen Street side of us which was also owned by the Norths. There was the back portion of a grocery store which was on the corner of Queen Street and Lithgow Street.

AA Was that Solomons Stores?

MP No, Solomons was a drapery store on the other side of Queen Street and it was further up the street. It was the David Jones of Campbelltown, the department store that sold everything.

AA Was there Bussills Brothers?

MP Yes, Bussills was on the corner. There was our house, Norths house, then Bussills, which was the grocery store on the corner of Queen Street and Lithgow Street.

AA Was that the one with the snake in it?

MP Yes, a huge carpet snake. Next door to Norths was the back part of the shop and there were sheds and the carpet snake used to live in one of the sheds. It was absolutely huge. Where the roof came down onto the wall there was a gap and he used to sleep there. Sometimes he would hang over the edge and have a look around. It got to the stage where we weren't in the least bit frightened on him. We were assured he wouldn't hurt us, but he was a big fellow.

20 mins

AA What did you think of Campbelltown when you first moved here?

MP Campbelltown was the biggest town that I had ever lived in. It wasn't very big then. We used to come down here on quite a regular basis, because we used to come here on holidays. My parents used to come and visit their parents and there was a brother living here at the same time, so we made regular trips even before we came to live here. I think that is one of the reasons that dad chose Campbelltown for us to live, because we were familiar with it as kids. I thought it was great, this huge big town. I liked Campbelltown as soon as I came here. My parents used to live in Moore Street which is now the Bypass. The house is still there. Mrs Patrick lives there; she was married to one of dad's brothers. They lived in it with my grandparents for a while. She is the only one left and she still lives in it.

AA So for schooling, I guess it was a bit of a change to go to a larger school.

MP We moved to Molong after Tanyinna and I was in 6th class there. When we came to Campbelltown I was only there for 6 months because I had already done 6 months at the school in Molong and so did my brother, he was in the same class. I was used to a big school if you could call it that, before I came to Campbelltown School. I was used to a big school where we had our own individual classes and not all in one room.

AA Did you settle in well, but I suppose you were used to travelling around?

MP Yes, it didn't really worry us because we did it all our lives. We were never on a permanent basis, we would just be getting used to everything and we would move again. It never worried me and apparently it didn't worry my brother. We never talked about it. It was just a thing we did, that was how we lived. My

younger brother didn't start school until we came to Campbelltown, so he never had the drama of it all.

AA Can you tell me about your primary school days, the friends and teachers that you had?

MP I can even remember the name of my headmaster at Leadville, his name was Mr Porter. He had a son called Monty and years later, I don't know where I was, I must have been in Campbelltown somewhere, this footballer came up in the paper and his name was Monty Porter, he used to play rugby league. My mum pointed it out to me and she said, do you remember this fellow and I said that's Monty Porter. My family were rugby league fanatics all their lives. They all played, my dad, his brothers, nephews and cousins, so we knew it was him.

25 mins

We had a one man teacher at Tanyinna and his name was Mr Mortimer. He had a daughter called Rosalie. I remember her because my uniform was a navy serge three pleated tunic as was every other girl there but Rosalie had a green one. Her mother was a dressmaker and she taught sewing to the older girls in the school. I didn't have sewing lessons, but the older girls did. They learnt to sew on a button, hem up a dress and the simple things, so I guess she made Rosalie's green uniform.

I don't remember very much about the school at Leadville. We used to have what was called, red, blue and green readers. They were reading books that had different coloured covers. I think the first one was blue, the next one was red, the next was green and the next was brown. When you got through one, when you got to the next class you graduated to the next book. When I started school at Leadville I could read everything that was in the first reader because I used to sit with mum while she went through it with my eldest brother. So I suppose it was my mother who more or less taught me now to read. So when I went to school I was again called a smart so-and-so by my brother, because I could read the whole of his book not just the chapter that he was up to. I loved reading, I couldn't get enough. It was a bit hard out in the bush to get books. It would have been Bethungra; we used to get a box full of books about once a month. It was a huge big wooden box that looked like a coffin. It used to arrive and you were allowed two books. I used to rush in and get my two books as soon as I could. My brother wasn't a real keen reader and I used to tell him to get some for me, they wouldn't know that it was me reading them. So he used to get them for me. Of course he would pick out the boys books, but I didn't care. I used to end up with four books a month; I used to think that was terrific. We used to get a school magazine and I thought that was terrific too, I would go through them from cover to cover. All the

magazines were the same no matter what class you were in, so I could only get one as they were all the same. We used to stand along the railway lines and even the men that worked there used to stand there and call out “paper, paper” and people used to throw papers and magazine out to us. Dad used to pick them up for me because he knew I was into reading and bring them home to me. That’s now I got a lot of my reading material. I didn’t get many books, still that’s how it goes.

AA So you went to Campbelltown Public School. What about teachers and friends there.

MP I was only there for six months but I found it quite easy to make friends. One of them in particular I am still friends with. I met her in 6th class in Campbelltown and we are still good mates. I still know three or four that I met in Campbelltown. Up until about two years ago, every Christmas we would have a Christmas dinner of ex pupils from Campbelltown Public School. It started off there must have been about 8 to 10 of us from Campbelltown Public School turned up for Christmas dinner. Gradually they have moved off and died off, now there are about four us left and we still go and have Christmas dinner, from all those years ago.

30 mins

AA I went to Liverpool; there wasn’t a High School in Campbelltown then. The closest one was at Liverpool. It was called Liverpool Home Science School. Some of us moved on a bit further and went to Homebush. I didn’t realise at that stage or I would have done something about it, but I just accepted the fact that it was Liverpool where we had to go and that’s all there was to it. It only went up to 3rd Year which was the Intermediate Certificate. If you wanted to do the Leaving Certificate you had to go to another school to Homebush or Parramatta. I wanted to because I wanted to be an air hostess. To be an air hostess in those days you had to have a language other than English and you couldn’t do languages at Liverpool. When I realised that I went home to dad and said that’s what I wanted to do and I would have to go on after Liverpool to either Homebush or Parramatta, he wouldn’t let me. He said you don’t need to do that. I said that I couldn’t learn a language at Liverpool; I would have to go elsewhere. He said the boys don’t want to do it so I don’t see why you should. I never forgave him for that for years. I had to leave when I got my Intermediate, that was it as far as he was concerned, that was good enough.

AA Was it because he thought girls shouldn’t work like that?

MP It was because I was only a girl. He said you don’t want to do that, the boys don’t want to do it and you’re only a girl. That’s what hurt most, the fact he said I was only a girl. That was his attitude and I had to accept it. In my mind I think the main reason was he would have had to outfit me completely again

with uniform and books and another three years at school without working. The eldest boy would have been and I think that was the main reason behind it. That was one part of my life that didn't eventuate as I would have liked it, but I was quite happy with what I finally did.

AA What did you end up doing?

35 mins

MP I went into the public service, State Government. I did the exams for that and I got into the Local Government Department. I couldn't leave school until I was 15 and I didn't turn 15 until the very last day of school. I did the public service exams and the bank exams and passed them all. I had a choice of where I wanted to work in the finish, what government department and a couple of banks. Anyway I chose the Local Government Department and started in the typing pool. I stayed there for 15 years. I didn't stay in the typing pool; I ended up working for one of the Managers in one of the departments. I was quite happy about it all, I did shorthand typing. I was still there when I was married. I left when I was six months pregnant. You weren't allowed to work in those days if you were pregnant.

It was funny in those days. This was a long time ago you know!! When we were in the typing pool we had to wear stockings and you couldn't wear slacks, your dresses had to be below the knee and your arms had to be covered. You couldn't wear a sleeveless top, you could wear short sleeves. I can still remember the old girl who was in charge of the typing pool, her name was Mrs Robinson. She was tough old bird. We had to sign a bond. Our parents had to sign bond, when they decided to employ us. There were a lot of 15 year old girls around the place. We had to sign this bond; I don't know how much it was a couple of hundred bucks I suppose. They extended our training. When I went to Liverpool Home Science School I didn't do the Home Science course. It was compulsory for the first year. You had to take cooking and sewing because it was a Home Science School. But after the first year you had a choice. You could still continue with what they called a commercial course. That is what I switched to. They taught you shorthand and typing, business principles and all that sort of thing. I only had two years of that so I had the basics.

When I got the job in the Local Government Department they decided to send us to tech to get our speeds up so that we were proficient in what we were doing. We went two afternoons a week from the office to Ultimo Tech for 2 or 3 hours and have further instruction. We did that for I think about six months and then for six months they sent us to Granville Tech for another couple of hours twice a week to build up our speeds in shorthand and typing. If we had left while that was going on my parents would have lost the bond that they

signed. The bond was to keep us there until we finished the course. We had to work in that department for 12 months after we finished our tech courses before we could leave. If I left, my parents would lose their bond. I was off and running in 12 months' time, I wasn't going to stay in the typing pool.

40 mins

In the department they had different sections with managers in them and I was transferred across to the engineering branch before my 12 months was up. It was terrific; there were four engineers and three examiners and about 18 meter testers stationed down at Redfern. I was in the City. I absolutely loved it, because I was the only there and all the guys were great. I stayed there in the engineering branch until I had to leave when I was 6 months pregnant. I had a good working life once I got out of the pool. I shouldn't complain because they trained me, they got me up to what I was capable of doing. You can't really blame them for hanging onto the girls for 12 months and getting their money's worth. They were all great guys and treated me like their daughter.

AA Where did you meet your husband?

MP I met him here in Campbelltown. His family migrated here from France. His parents had five boys and a girl. His mother went through the war. She ran away from the Germans, packed up everything and moved out. If the kids had been born in a town that was occupied by the Germans they would have been classified as German. She ended up in the French Underground. The main thing was that the five boys would have had to do compulsory army service and the two eldest boys were eligible for that. She thought she didn't have five sons to end up fighting in Algeria, so she decided to get up. She packed up everything she could and migrated to Australia. They were living here and I became friendly with the girl. One of them was the guy that I ended up marrying. I was quite happy being married to him for as long as I was. He was in the police force and I blame that a lot for things not working out as they should have. I don't know whether it was or not but he changed completely after a few years. The first ten years of our marriage was great until it gradually worsened and worsened and our kids were starting to suffer and I thought this isn't good for them or me and I decided to leave.

45 mins

AA How many children did you have?

MP I have two. I had three, but I lost one which was stillborn. I didn't breed too well; I have two girls and two grandchildren. Actually, my eldest grandchild turned 21 last week. They're in Melbourne and I don't see much of them now that they are grown and my second girl lives in Newcastle. She comes down

usually once a month to see me. She doesn't have children. I think my husband is still alive. I am not sure, last I heard he was. He moved to Queensland eventually. The girls don't have contact with him. They were suffering as much as me. It wasn't good for them. Up until then I had a terrific married life, I was perfectly happy for at least 10 to 12 years. But these things happen.

AA Did your father live to a fair age?

MP He was 72 when he died of lung cancer. He was a heavy smoker all his life and a heavy drinker. He used to work very hard too. I can remember when we were at Leadville; he started out as a fettler a pick and shovel man. Working on the railway in those days was nothing like it is today with the big machines that come along and lift up the rails and sleepers. It was all hand done with a pick and shovel. He used to work all day on the railway and he used to do what was called lumping wheat at night. The farmers used to bring the bags of wheat in on their trucks and my dad and the other guys used to have to unload the bags of wheat from the trucks onto the railway trucks. The bags were pretty heavy and they were lifting them out of the trucks and carrying them up into the railway trucks. He used to do that at night after he had worked all day. He didn't do it every night, about 2 or 3 nights a week he would lump wheat. It was hard work. He worked hard all his life until he ended up with the office job on the railway. He smoked heavily and drank heavily, that was his life.

AA Of all the buildings that have been demolished in Campbelltown over the years are there any that you had fond memories of? Any that made you sad when they went.

MP Our favourite building in Campbelltown was the old flour mill on Campbelltown Road. When we were kids, before we became teenagers, our main occupation was bike riding. Everyone had a bike and we would ride everywhere. We used to go all over the place on our pushbikes. We used to go all over Campbelltown; we even used to go across to Camden on the weekend, which you could in those days because there wasn't much traffic around. This was our favourite place, the old flour mill. We used to go down there all the time. We used to take biscuits and put them in the cracks for the rats. Every time we went back, the biscuits would be gone so we presumed that the rats had come and taken them.

50 mins

AA It would have been a fascinating place for kids I suppose.

MP It really was. We used to go out to the river to Freres Crossing. We didn't go to the Woolwash; we just seemed to prefer Freres Crossing. Probably

because we were involved with kids from Kentlyn and they were closer to Freres Crossing than to the Woolwash I suppose. We used to go crayfishing, yabbing. They were big ones not little tiddlers like you get in a dam. Some people reckoned they were really fresh water lobsters. I don't know if that was true or not, but they were big ones. We used a piece of string with a lump of meat on the end of it and the river was so clear you could see them coming. You would throw it in and sit on the bank and see them coming. We had scoops made out of wire netting and when they got up close enough we would bend down and scoop them up. We used to double check to see if they were ladies or gentlemen. If they had eggs, they would fold them underneath their tail. You had to pull their tail down to see if they had eggs. If they did, you threw them back. When the area became more populated people didn't bother doing that, they just kept them whether they had eggs or not. That's the wrong thing to do. Eventually they became fished out, you would be lucky to find one in the Georges River now. We used to throw them back. In those days you could light fires out in the bush. The boys would light fire and one of them would have a tin to put on the fire. I used to hate that, I would walk away when they boiled the water and I didn't eat them. I still don't eat crayfish or lobster.

Nobody had cars; it wasn't until later on when we got up in our late teens, that a couple of boys including my brother got a motorbike or an old bomb car. But that was all we seemed to do, riding our bikes, hiking through the bush down to the river and swimming in the river at Freres. There was a special spot there where we used to swim. There used to be a bridge across the river in those days until it got washed away in a flood. There was always a swimming hole and a yabby hole; we used to have a lot of fun.

55 mins

AA What about funny characters from Campbelltown's past?

MP There was one old fellow called Paddy Hunt. In our street there was old Bill North, he was a bit of a character. He was a funny old fellow. We used to have wood stoves. When we got a new load of wood, we would hear this person walking in our yard at night. We would look out and it would be Bill. He would get an armload of wood that had just been delivered to us. He would then go up the road and sell it to someone for five bob. Then when they got a load of wood, he would do the same to them. He would get an armload from them and come down and sell it to my mum. They all knew that he was doing it. He was married once, because one of his daughters used to live in a house in Lithgow Street.

Have you ever heard about Rose Payten? They lived across Morgan's Gate Bridge. She used to cross over it and go to what we now call the Industrial Area. Their house was over there. She was a great tennis player. They had

tennis courts. One of my friends was Jenny Gonsalves whose father had an oars factory down in the area where the gardens are now. He had an oars factory behind the house. Jenny was quite taken with Rose Payten. She would be almost in tears sometimes when she talked about her. I suppose it was dementia or something like that when she was older. She used to come across the bridge past Jenny's house in the middle of the road. It wasn't like it is now. She would have one shoe on and one shoe off. She would be carrying the other shoe. Jenny used to see her and go out to her and try to get her to put her other shoe on. She just wouldn't know where she was going or what she was doing or anything like that. Jenny used to try and catch her every time she went past. Where she ended up when she got into the main street we never knew. Jenny never followed her or anything. It was a fair way from the main street. She had a purpose, she was going somewhere. You couldn't say she was only half dressed, but she would have her clothes on the wrong way, or she would have two arms in the one sleeve. Poor old soul. Jenny used to be fascinated by this one shoe, but she wouldn't put the other one on. She would say she would put it on when she got home, but she wouldn't be heading home, she was headed for the main street. In those days we wouldn't know what dementia might have been, we just thought she had gone completely potty. Apparently when she was young, she was a good looking woman. She was a good tennis and golf player. That's how she ended up.

60 mins

MP There was a father and son, quite well built fellows. The father would have been in his late 50s with a white moustache and the son would probably have been in his late 20s. They had these two beautiful big horses and they used to ride up Campbelltown's main street usually on a Saturday morning. They would ride up side by side. I used to think who are you and what are you doing. They had a property at Minto and used to ride their horses from Campbelltown to Minto. Where they started from, I don't know. I never saw them coming, only going. Their name was O'Donnell and the son's name was Hal. That's all I know. I was fascinated by them. They never galloped, they just walked the horses up the main street as much as to say here I am, look at me.

AA Where did your family do their grocery shopping?

MP There was a Bussills and a Bursills which were the grocery shops in Campbelltown. There were a couple of fruit and vegie shops; there was Mrs Fairbairn and Fred Blower. They just did their shopping locally. There was Downes Department Store which was where Solomons used to be. When Solomons sold out or moved on or whatever they did Downes took over. They did more or less the same things as Solomons. They had drapery, clothing etc. After that Ron Moore took over the premises before he moved to Minto.

AA What do you think of the main street now?

MP Awful, terrible, disgusting, ashamed. You wouldn't expect it to be as it was, but it should be better than what it is. What can you do, you couldn't have a department store like Solomons or Downes with the Malls around. They wouldn't make a living. They just let it go.

AA Was there a place in the main street where you would hang about when you were a teenager?

65 mins

MP Not really. As we grew up and became teenagers we used to go dancing. They were held in the Town Hall, that's where I learnt to dance. We used to travel around a lot. We used to go out to Tahmoor, Picton and places like that. By then some of the boys would manage to get a car. They weren't the best cars in the world, but we used to load the cars up and go to all the dances. When we were younger and into our teens we used to go to the pictures a lot. When we were around 12 to 14 we used to go to the Saturday afternoon matinees. As we grew up and became teens, we used to go on Saturday nights with our boyfriends. We used to go upstairs when we had a boyfriend. That was our life, movies, bike riding, swimming, fishing, cray fishing when we were kids and we still did it when we did become teenagers but it wasn't our whole life. We had other things to do like dancing and going into Sydney.

I always considered myself lucky because I lived in the country town which was Campbelltown and worked in the city. I would be working in the city during the day and come home to the country town at night and had all the fun of a country town and all the excitement of working in the city. Most of the girls didn't have that. A lot of them stayed in Campbelltown and that's all they knew and didn't know about life in the city. I had two friends that lived in the city, one lived in Lavender Bay and one lived in Artarmon. I used to stay with them at their parents house when we had nights out in the city. We would go to the movies in the city which was different to the little movie cinema in Campbelltown. We would go to the State Cinema and places like that, so I had a life in the city as well. I was still involved with the Festivals in my home town. I was in the Miss Spirit in Campbelltown.

AA Did you go to the football with your family?

70 mins

MP Yes, always went to the football even when we were kids. We followed the Kangaroos in the old Duguid football oval. We had some great times when we were growing up. There were three football teams in Campbelltown. There was Campbelltown Kangaroos which was the town's football team, the RSL Warriors and the Catholic Collegians.

AA Apparently they played on a ground where Campbelltown Mall is now, do you remember that? It was around 1970.

MP I don't remember that. They could have, but I don't remember it. Three teams was a lot for a small town. Our main rivals were Camden, we used to hate Camden. They're still going. We had boyfriends, cousins, uncles that played. We were right into football. We were into football as small kids and when we grew into teenagers.

AA How do you feel about Campbelltown today?

MP I think it's a good place to live as far as facilities go. There is a lot for kids to do now. The only sport for a girl then really was tennis or hockey. I couldn't play tennis because I couldn't focus on a moving ball as I have a stigmatism in my eye. I played hockey at school. That was good because the ball was on the ground and I could focus on that. I tried to get into a hockey team, but there was a waiting list a mile long as there was only one team. There was no netball or basketball or anything like that.

I couldn't get into hockey, so I took up marching and became a marching girl. There were a couple of teams of us when we first started off. We used to practice with the local Camden/Campbelltown Band. We used to practice on the football oval with a drum. One of the drummers would come along and beat his drum while we practices marching. We were going quite well. By this time we were in our late teens and boyfriends came along. Gradually girls would drift off because they would want to go out with their boyfriend. Eventually it just broke down, there weren't enough of us and the marching girl fad faded out. It was all the rage once.

75 mins

MP Eventually there were only three of us marching girls left so one of the bandsmen decided that we would have three majorettes in the band. I was one of them, Carol Castleton was another and Margaret who was the daughter of one of the members of the band. So we had these three girls in little short skirts, tall white boots marching out in front of the band which was quite good. Eventually they dropped off and I was the only one left. I thought that was that my marching career is over. I don't know who it was; probably the band leader said they would just have me as the drum major in front of the band. Instead of having a male member of the band out the front with the mace and swinging the stick they had me. They talked me into it. They had a uniform made for me, the jacket with the brass epaulettes, short white skirt and high white boots and stuck me out in front. I was there for years. I used to go everywhere with the band. We used to travel around in a bus, do all the ANZAC marches. That would have been in the late 50s and early 60s. It was fun.

AA You would have been known as the girl who marched in front of the band.

MP I lot of people still remember me. They would say that they know me from somewhere and had I lived here a long time. Why would I remember you? I would ask if they remember the girl who marched in front of the band. Then they would remember me. It was a good time. They were a good bunch of guys. They were a mixed bunch; they were mostly old fellows who had shops in the town and a couple of solicitors. I still know people who were in the band or married to someone from the band. I used to paint my legs with brown leg paint and people would say I always had a lovely tan. It was all fake tan. We used to do three ANZAC marches. We used to do Campbelltown, Camden and Tahmoor. We would do Campbelltown and get on the bus and go to Camden and then to Tahmoor in the afternoon. After we did the march we were always invited back to the club or where they were having the service. Alcohol flowed freely.

Tahmoor was our last march and we used to go to the club afterwards which was the only one that we had time to go to. The old bandsmen were cunning. They would tell me where to sit and then they would place themselves around. I didn't realise what they were doing but they knew that as soon as I sat down the old diggers would come along with a beer saying "How you going love, you did a good job, there's a beer for you." I would sip the beer, I liked a beer, I still do. Then someone else would come along and give me another one and I would have all these beers lined up. So that's why the guys would tell me where to sit. They knew that I wouldn't drink them all, so they would take my beer. They would drink theirs down to a little bit in the bottom, put that down in front of me and take one of the full ones. They would end up sozzled. They would love it, telling me to come and sit at their table. They were funny days. I was with them for years.

80 mins

AA Have you ever heard of the Flying Garlands? We have a photograph taken in the 1950s of a band in the main street. Out the front of the band are there girls doing hand stands and somersaults and they have a sign saying the Flying Garlands. They were more of an acrobatic type thing.

MP I used to swing a mace they called it and I would start the band with a whistle and stop the band with a whistle. I couldn't play any sport or get into a hockey team so it was a good alternative. It was good living in Campbelltown and it still is. I enjoy living in Campbelltown, I'm not actually in Campbelltown, I live in Ingleburn. When we were first married we lived in Maroubra. My ex-husband was in the mounted police. In those days the police had to do country service. They don't have to do that anymore apparently. First of all he was transferred to Walgett, but when they realised that I had two little girls,

one in kindy and one just a baby, they realised that we couldn't go there, being married to a policeman and having a little girl going to school there, that was out. They changed it to Forbes. So we went there, it was good, I enjoyed that too. That was no problem. In country towns in those days, you couldn't stay there with kids. There was nowhere for them to go and nothing for them to do. I was lucky that mine were young, I was born and bred in country towns, lived in them all my life. But to live in them and not have the facilities available that you would like your kids to have was a bit tough. But I did enjoy living in Forbes. I met a lot of people there that I am still friends with. It is a great life for young kids. After they grow up, they start to move and look for work and it is rather difficult unless you own a property of course.