

INTERVIEW NO. 33

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 5/3/92

MRS. JUDITH EASTWELL *[Interview taken in the Post Office at Quakers Hill.]*  
36 Lalor Road  
QUAKERS HILL. 2763.

0.28 My name is Judith Eastwell and I live at 36 Lalor Road, Quakers Hill. I was born on the 14th September 1945, and my nationality is Australia. I am married and I have three children.

**0.45 First of all I'll just ask you some background questions. Have long have you lived in Blacktown?**

I have lived in Blacktown area for approximately 33 years. I have spent 15 years in Canberra and the rest of that time I have lived in this area.

**Right. You were born in this area were you?**

I came to this area when I was two.

**1.15 And what kind of work did your father do?**

My father was Postmaster of this Post Office.

**And you're following in his footsteps?**

Yes.

**And did your mother work at all?**

Yes. My mother worked nearly all her life. Actually her working life was finished off here in this Post Office and she was forced to quit after an armed robbery, and she just couldn't face the thought of ever coming back again. But before that she always worked as an accountant or dealt with figures.

**Right. Even when you were small children, did she work then too?**

She worked all her life.

**Did she? As well as rearing children?**

Six children, she had, so it was very hard to sort of manage of one wage back in those days.

**2.09 So you were one of six children?**

The eldest.

**The eldest, right. So did that mean you had lots of responsibility?**

Most definitely. (Laughs)

**2.20 So what would your first memories of this area be like - your first impressions of this area?**

Well I have an excellent memory and I remember things back beyond ages that people say that you should be able to remember, but my earliest records of this area was I lived in Lalor Road, which was a dirt road from when I remember. Up the road from our house there's a big hill and I remember riding my scooter down the hill and up the hill and never seeing a car! And as it's the main dragway these days, of course, you can't even cross the road without

having to pause. So that road in itself has come a long way. It's something I remember very well.

**3.13 And what about the landscape? Was it more bush and the houses fairly sparse?**

Oh, yes. You didn't ... except for what we call the area of the village, which is bounded by Lalor Road, Highfield Road, Pearce Road and those three basic roads, and High Road, most people lived in that area in the village, and over this side of the railway line you didn't have a house next door to another house. There was always a big gap.

**In between?**

In between. And my father, when he first took over the Post Office, he always recollects the first day he started work - it's a bit of standing joke in our family - that he turned up for work at eighty thirty to open the Post Office and the Postmaster that was retiring said 'Why weren't you here at five o'clock?' and he said 'Why?' and he said 'Well you should have been here to take the mail off the train because you've got to deliver the mail before you open!' And nobody had told my father about that and he thought well, how was he going to deliver the mail because he knew where a lot of people lived but he didn't have any maps or numbers. So he set off that night after he finished work and went around and did a little map of how he was going to deliver and there was 350 homes in Quakers Hill.

**4.46 Really!**

Yes.

**When would that have been? What year?**

About 1950. I'm not too sure.

**Round about then?**

Around about 1950 or 1951.

**Yes. So things have really changed since then!**

Oh, yes.

**5.06 And what sort of house did you live in?**

We lived in a two-bedroom weather-board home, with a front verandah. We had blinds and my sister and myself slept on the front verandah and never thought anything of it - winter, summer - and from there, because we eventually became a family of six children, we moved from Lalor Road to Douglas Road, which is the main road here, and moved into a bigger home when I was fourteen or so. I didn't want to leave my other house, but I didn't have any choice!

**5.47 And in this weather-board house did you have an inside toilet?**

Oh, no.

**You wouldn't have had the sewer on?**

Oh, no. On a quarter-acre block the toilet was about ten feet off the back fence. And I live next door to where I originally lived!

**Now you do?**

Yes.

And there's still the path that I helped my father lay - the concrete path - down the middle of this backyard, but there's no toilet of course there. The house is gone.

**Oh is it?**

Oh yes. It was purchased by someone and taken off and put on another block of land somewhere. I don't know where.

**So it wasn't demolished?**

No. It wasn't demolished. It was taken off and another house was bought and put on the block.

**Really!**

So... they did that while I was in Canberra, so I was quite pleased I never saw that, because I always used to go pass and think 'Oh, one of these days I'm going to buy that house back and live there.'

**6.40 So it is a bit sad to see these old landmarks go, especially when they've been part of your life?**

Oh, yes. That's right, yes.

**6.47 And so in those days when you lived there, and I suppose also when you moved to Douglas Street, what would your mother's daily routine have been like?**

My mother's daily routine ... now when my mother had just us three girls she started working on the telephone exchange here in Quakers Hill with my father, and I remember her being pregnant with my three brothers and working up until the day she went into labour on the telephone exchange.

**Really!**

Yes. And then after that she continued to work here and I remember bringing her down her meals of a night while she worked till ten o'clock. But back in those days the exchange closed down at ten o'clock and you couldn't make a phone call between ten o'clock and six o'clock in the morning, because ... well, sometimes you had a night boy and other times you didn't! I think you had a night boy Friday and Saturday night or something. So if there was an emergency in Quakers Hill and you wanted to get somebody - you know, a doctor or an ambulance - well you had to get a car and go to Blacktown to phone.

**8.08 Really! And there weren't any hospitals close by either, I suppose?**

Well there was a tiny private hospital in Blacktown, but most of the time people went to Parramatta Hospital.

**So that would be ... a lot of people wouldn't have had cars, too, I suppose?**

Oh, no. No. My parents didn't have a car for many, many years. But my father eventually - when he first started the Post Office - had a push-bike and then it was a bit slow because he was struggling to get back here by nine, so he had a motor-bike.

**So he delivered the mail by push-bike did he?**

He delivered the mail by push-bike originally and then he purchased the motor-bike and did it on the motor-bike.

**8.48 And so what did your mother do - how did she get on with raising the children? Did you do a lot of that?**

She was very lucky that she had three daughters! (Laughs). I always recollect someone saying to my mother one day that she'd done a beautiful job of raising six children, and a very good friend of the family's said 'Oh, no. She did a very good job of raising her girls, but Judith raised the boys!' (Laughs). So, it's a bit of a ...

**The boys were younger were they?**

Yes. I was ten years older than the first boy and 13 years older than the last boy. So ... in fact I had to leave High School and Geoff was born on the 8th November and I was pulled out of High School to look after my mother. My mother was very ill after she had my last brother, and I didn't go back to school until the following February. And I remember, back in those days, we washed sheets in the copper and we had a hand wringer and I did all the washing, so ...

**9.53 So you mother was really lucky to have the three of you!**

Oh, yes. I think so. But by the same token we were very lucky to have her!

**10.02 Yes. And what did she do for shopping?**

Shopping ... over on the corner is the Australian Real Estate Office. There used to be a general store there. Over on this corner here where the Gary Mead Real Estate is, there was a general store there, and the original Post Office was on the corner where the chicken shop is and over the other side of the railway line where the vet is, that used to be the butchers. So, I'm quite sure that Mum basically shopped in Quakers Hill. Because she didn't have time!

**Would she have had deliveries, or would she have had to carry everything?**

Yes. I think McGarrahers used to deliver. And after that Poppy Basil ran the store and he used to deliver and I know that at Christmas time, if my mother wanted to do Christmas shopping for us she always had a day in Sydney. That was a really big deal, you know, she went off out for the day.

**Just for Christmas shopping?**

Just for Christmas shopping, yes.

**11.09 So you mother did all her shopping locally except for Christmas shopping.**

Yes. And then, eventually, I know my mother started shopping in Parramatta because the stores started to grow in Parramatta, and in fact - I think I was telling you the other night on the phone - I always distinctly remember my mother going to Parramatta to buy my birthday present for my fourteenth birthday, and while she was gone my four-year-old brother set fire to the shed and while they were off shopping in Parramatta I was putting out a fire! You know, I always remember the trauma of it all! And it was all my fault, when Mum and Dad came home, that he had found some matches. Well, I don't know where he found the matches, so ... they used to be hidden. But we needed them to light the chip-heater for our bath, the copper for our hot water and I remember, it was a really big deal. All of a sudden we didn't have the chip-heater anymore! We had a hot water system where you pushed the button on and pushed another button off and water used to go through and go into the bath and we had running hot water. And it wasn't boiling hot in the bathroom anymore. I really remember that.

**12.40 And what about doctors in the area?**

No. Our local doctor was Dr. McKenzie in Blacktown - which was a husband and wife. I do recollect going to originally a dentist in Parramatta when I was quite young, and then eventually going to dentists in Blacktown. So I presume there weren't any dentists in

Blacktown in those days. But our doctors were always in Blacktown and I was quite a sickly child, so I was at the doctor a lot, and in fact - thinking back on my memory - I used to get a lot of gastro infections I presume because back in those days there was no sewerage. I presume that! But I also had very bad tonsils, but it's probably a combination of both. But I always remember I'd been in bed for a week and the circus was in Blacktown, and it was such a big deal, and the circus was in Francis Park long before they put up the Rugby League place and things like that! So they were taking us to the circus and it was a great outing and by this stage my father did have a car, and we got to the circus and I went over and I was standing there watching the elephants and that's the last thing I remember! And I fainted! And Dad had gone to park the car and Mum had taken all of us children over to see the animals before we went into the circus, and Mum was thinking 'What will I do?' when my doctor walked past. She said 'Doctor, quickly, it's Judith, it's Judith!' He came over and he said 'Oh, I think this might be a bit too much.' 'Oh, she really wanted to see the circus!' He said 'Hang on a minute. I've got something in my car that will make her feel better.' I don't know if it was some sort of glucose lollies, but it was something that he mixed up and I drank and I felt much better and I was able to stay for the circus! 'Cause I didn't want to go home! I wanted to see those elephants!

**Well that was lucky wasn't it that he walked past!**

Yes. It was. But, you know, that's how friendly and how casual things were back in those days. It's sort of changed a little bit these days. There were definitely no doctors here.

**15.00 Did you actually have the phone on at home?**

Yes.

**You did. You were one of the few houses ... ?**

Quakers Hill #89!

**So that means you were number 89 to get the phone on was it?**

I would say probably, yes, but it started off as a hundred-phone switch board. So we were Quakers Hill #89 and my father still has 89 on the end of his number.

**Oh does he?**

Yes. 626-9289!

**15.33 And what about household appliances? Did your mother ... she obviously had fuel stoves and coppers and things ... did she have any electrical appliances?**

Nope. My grandmother had a fuel stove all her life - who also lived in Quakers Hill - and she cooked the best cakes in the whole area, definitely, and applies pies and ... you know. But my mother, I can never recollect having a fuel stove. She had an electric stove.

**What about vacuum cleaners and electric jugs and toasters and that sort of thing?**

I remember the lay-down toaster and the old ceramic electric jug and I've got an idea my mother even had an old Mixmaster - you know, the really old ones? Because we used to spend Sunday cooking.

**Did you?**

Specially in winter. We'd be cooking cakes and tarts and things like that and that was for us for school through the week. Yes, so she used to cook for the whole week.

Did she make jams and things like that?

Oh, a few times. My mother really loved fig jam and she couldn't convince any of her children to like it! (Laughs). We had a fig tree, so ... I can remember she made a really nice plum jam but my grandmother being so clever in anything like that, Nanna always seemed to be the one that provided us with the pickles and the jams and the eggs and Nanna had ducks and chooks. Interestingly enough, I always remember when my children were little - bear in mind I'm the eldest and my children are the eldest grandchildren - that my Nanna ... my children didn't know what to call her, and everybody in our family seemed to be Nanna! So they had Big Nanna and Little Nanna and the other Nanna, but this Nanna in particular was called 'Chookie' Nanna! And they still talk about Chookie Nanna to this day, and you know, she died 14 years ago and she was 84 years old. But she was a very well-known identity in this area too. But you couldn't go past her cooking. If you gave us a choice between Mum's and Nan's cooking, we were always at Nanna's! (Laughs). She made really different things, you know, like ginger-cakes and banana cakes, whereas my Mum would make little cupcakes and ice them. But we just thought it was much better to have some ginger-cake with ginger icing. They both had their specialities, so ...

**18.38 And so when you were growing up your mother had her own mother close by too, so you had a good family network?**

Two streets away, yes. Which was interesting because my mother's parents were actually divorced when my mother was five years old in 1925. And that was a big no-no back in those days. But they lived out in the country and nobody really knows why they divorced, but I do know that my grandmother had eight full-term pregnancies to have three living children, and she had a very hard life, and she had two boys that survived and my mother was her only girl that survived. And so my mother had to put up with a tug-of-war between her parents. They lived 80 miles apart, and the only transport back in those days was horse and sulky, and so periodically my grandmother would drive from Condobolin to Ungarie and pinch her! And then she'd take her back to Condobolin and then the next thing you'd know, my grandfather would go and pinch her back. So, they got back together when my mother turned 18 and they ... it's interesting because my mother was always probably closer to her father, but she loved having her mother around. But my Nanna watched ... oh, I suppose she tried to give that time and love to us three girls that she never could give to her own daughter, because her own daughter wasn't around. So, it's really interesting, 'cause as I said to you, I'm doing my family tree, so it's really interesting - a lot of things that I pick up on and that people speak to me about.

**20.46 And so what was the main mode of transport here when you were a child? It was the train I suppose?**

The train, yes.

**Was that it?**

Yes. Interestingly enough, growing up around here, all my girlfriends rode horses, but we never did because we couldn't afford one! So, it was always the train.

**And you walked a lot I suppose?**

Yes. Or rode on our push-bikes. I actually lived over that side of the railway line and went to Quakers Hill Primary School which is quite a long way away.

**21.16 How did you get there?**

We got there by taxi which cost a penny a day, and Auntie Thel, her father was taxi driver, and he had a dickie-seat in the back of his car and so he picked up so many kids. I tell a lie when I said I went every day. I went on a rainy day in the taxi. We weren't allowed to ride our bikes when it was raining. So we went in the taxi those days. It cost a penny.

**A penny a day!**

A penny a day.

**21.48 So what was the traffic like then, getting to school, I don't suppose there was much?**

Non-existent! And we weren't allowed to cut across the railway line, but a lot of times we did! Because we could save ourselves 20 minutes! (Laughs). And now these days the straight route that we used to take straight to the school, with the new road, it's cut off the direct route to the school that we used to go.

**You've got to go a lot further now to get there?**

Oh, yes.

**22.15 And did you go to High School?**

I went to Blacktown Girls' High School which was actually Blacktown High School which was a Co-educational High when I first went there. I started there the second year it was opened, and I went there for two years as co-ed and two years as a twin school - girls and boys separate. So, that was very different, but I hated boys so I thought it was great to become a girls only school.

**22.46 And what did you do after school? Did you do your work straight away?**

I used to ... I could always remember at least once a week Mum would give me a note and I'd have to do some shopping for her in Blacktown. Maybe it was to buy some sewing cotton or different things like that, I vaguely remember. But I had to get a note and carry it around Blacktown in case any of the teachers saw me still there in my school uniform. It was rather sad. We used to get out of school at five past three and our train didn't go till ten to four. So their idea was they didn't want us hanging round the station, so we went on to something which was called Richmond Line Detention. We weren't really on detention. They just detained us till three-thirty, and then we'd walk down and catch the train. So I used to have to produce a note if my mother wanted me to do some shopping to let me out of school at the same time as everybody else, and go and do the shopping and hopefully still get on the same train. I would come home and my three brothers would have been playing in the back of the Post Office, and I'd get them and I'd take them home. By the time my parents would get home I would have tea on and my three brothers bathed.

**24.10 So you didn't have much time for playing or recreation?**

No.

**And what did you do in the school holidays?**

Well I'm a reader and at least once a week we used to have - we used to call them expeditions - and my best girlfriend and my sister - my next sister to me, Terry - we'd take off on our bikes with a picnic. But that was only if Mum was off that day. You know, she wasn't on a shift, like with the switch-board, and she was always off once a week. That was the day we'd have our expedition, and that was our break. And we actually ... I don't know if you know Marayong very well ... but there was this great big hill there. It was always called Quakers Hat because it was in the shape of a Quaker's hat, and that is actually now where Marayong Heights Primary School is. And we used to love going there and going, sitting on top of the hill, and having a picnic and rolling down. I don't know why we rolled down! I really don't! We thought that was great fun! Or riding right up the top of High Road, and there's a hill there, and just having a picnic there as well. Or we'd ride to Riverstone and see my cousin, play records with him. It was great. He had a record player.

**25.40 And you didn't actually go away for a holiday at all in the school holidays, to the beach or anything like that?**

No when I was extremely young. But I remember going away for my first camping holiday when I was maybe ten, and we went to Toukley, that's the Central Coast. It took us three and a half hours to get there.

**By train?**

No, no. By car. And my father didn't even have a trailer. He had a roof-rack and everything was packed on top of the car, and I remember we did that for a couple of years. And the second year that we went up there, as we went around a really bad bend, the roof rack came off the car and my father and I were even talking about that last Christmas while we were at Toukley. We still go to Toukley! And then ultimately we progressed to ... Dad got a trailer and then he bought a frame of a very, very small caravan and he fitted it out so that there was a single bed one end and a table the other end which converted to a double bed. So whoever was the baby at the time always slept in the caravan, and the rest of us still slept in the 18 x 12 foot tent next to the caravan. I mean they didn't have annexes in those days. And then gradually they progressed on to having a bigger van with an annex and we also had a van with an annex and we used to all go to the same place because we love it.

**And it has happy memories for you too?**

Oh yes. And it's peaceful.

**27.24 And did your mother belong to any community organisations or anything like that?**

Both my parents did. My mother and father - I can't quite remember what rank either of them held - but I know at one stage one was President and one was Secretary of the P & C. My mother was on the Grand Committee of Quakers Hill Primary School to establish Quakers Hill East Primary School, and there was three of them on the Grand Committee and they had to decide which parcel of land to purchase with the new school, and the reasons why and the Education Department then purchased the land that actually my mother decided would be the best, and she was on that Committee for many, many years. My parents were both A-grade tennis players, and that is perhaps why we didn't do a lot on weekends because my parents were away or at home playing tennis. We had a tennis court across the road from our house and that was the home tennis court. I do remember finals one day and my father was in the mixed doubles men's final, and my baby sister fell into a dam and got entangled in barbed wire. And we went running up and said that Sue had fallen in the water and my father had to run off the court. And they were leading four-nil in the first set! And my father dived in and tore his leg on the barbed wire and got my sister out, and she was ultimately fine. Then an hour and a half later, after she'd gone to the hospital - presumably to Parramatta - and was treated, my father came back to finish the game and he never one a game after that! I always remember that. My mother was an extremely well-known craftswoman in the area, and in fact growing up she went to tech for cake-decorating, millinery, floral arrangements, dress-making. Anything to do with drafts my mother learned properly about, and she was very renowned towards the end of her life for her Faberge eggs. And, in fact as I said to you, I lost my Mum in a car accident - and two weeks before that she just won first prize at the Royal Easter Show for her model of the coach with Australian had given the Queen, and she made the egg and it was a replica of the coach. And my father was ... they were both very involved in the lapidary club - and my father was President of Parramatta/Holroyd Lapidary Club for many years and I think they had been in over 30 years. We used to go on expeditions and look for petrified wood and agate and things, so we learned ... we had a very varied life, I can honestly say, growing up and even to today - which my daughter would probably disagree with - but I could honestly say that I've never said 'I'm bored!'. Because I never had been! Because there's always something to do.

**Well you had role model to follow, didn't you? Both your parents being active people.**

Oh, yes.



**31.11 So when you got married - well, after you left school, what sort of work did you do? Did you come into the Post Office?**

No. The first two years of my life, interestingly enough my father...

END SIDE A

SIDE B

1.02 My father, when he first got out of the Army - 'cause he served in World War II - I think his first job was he got a job at Riverstone Meat Company and from there he became a traveller - a commercial traveller for Marcus Clarke's, which is ultimately got the car - our first car - which was a black Austin A40, I still remember.

**What year would that have been, do you know, roughly?**

Oh, maybe when I was about four or five, so it would be about 1950. And as I said my mother was already working in the Post Office here and my Dad ultimately got the job as Postmaster here through my Mum. Only because of my Mum. Anyway, my Dad, every time they'd go to Sydney - if they had a day out in Sydney - he'd pop into Marcus Clarke's and see his old boss, so his old boss was still there, and he got me a job there at the end of my third year at High School, which was the Intermediate year, and he got me a job there through the school holidays. And at the end of the school holidays I thought it was marvellous! I actually had money in the bank and you know I never had money in my life and Mr. Gates, my boss, rang my Dad and said 'We'd like Judith to stay. Did you have any intention of her going back to school?' And Dad said 'No'. But he told me a lot of years later they couldn't afford for me to go back to school because they really needed to have me working. My first job I got paid five pound nineteen and eleven a week. I paid nineteen and tenpence in tax and so I had five pound and one penny!

**To spend?**

Yes. And it cost me one pound ten a week for a weekly ticket, and I remember I paid one pound ten a week for my board. So I virtually had ...

**At home?**

At home. So I virtually had two pound and one penny a week and I used to put those one pennies away. I used to think it was so lovely. I was watching this pile of one pennies mount up! I mean, that's nothing these days, of course. Although the penny was worth more than a cent is of course! And I was there two years and Marcus Clarke's went bankrupt and I'd just come back from my yearly holidays and I'd come back to work on a Friday, which was just the way it worked out, and I thought 'Why are all these young girls sitting in our desks?' Because a lot of us had gone on holidays - we were seventeen - and I actually was a supervisor of two girls, and those two girls were actually older than me. So I was their boss! And I said to Bev 'What's going on?' and she said 'I don't know!'. The next minute this - what they call an efficiency expert - came out and said 'We just thought we'd talk to the whole lot of you as a group. You'll be leaving next Tuesday, you'll be paid till next Friday as we've had to retrench you.' And I thought 'Well what is retrenchment?' Everybody knows now, but I didn't quite know what a retrenchment was, and I thought how can I go home and tell my mother and father I got the sack! In the meantime Mr. Gates had retired and he always had looked after me. I'd always worked in his offices and ...

**4.38 This was at Broadway was it, in the city?**

Yes. Yes, and I used to walk down the long ramp at Central and straight across the level crossing and there I was, there! An eight-storey building it was. So I thought 'What will I do?' and I got in a bus and I went down to Anthony Horderns in my lunch hour, and I asked where was the office so I could see about getting work. I went and saw this lady and she said, 'Oh, we're looking for people, hang on a moment and I'll get someone to interview you.'

and they said 'When can you start?' I said 'Oh, well, I'm leaving next Tuesday!' and they said 'What about next Thursday, that's the start of the new pay week?' I said 'Fine!'. So, I remember going home that night ... and I went back to work, needless to say, and told all my friends and they went straight down there and a lot of them got jobs at Anthony Horderns. I left on the Tuesday and I had Wednesday off in the middle of the week, having a day off, and then on the Thursday I started work at Anthony Horderns and I worked there 20 months. I was forced into leaving there because I had had glandular fever and German measles, and I was very run down and my doctor said the travelling was taking me too long. I was catching a train at seven in the morning and getting home at twenty to seven of a night. So it was ... steam trains!

### **A long day!**

And it was a long day. I was lucky enough to get a job at PGH Industrial Products at Doonside and I worked there until I was married.

### **6.30 What year were you married?**

1966. And then when I was expecting Michelle - we lived in a flat at Stanmore - so instead of me being at Quakers Hill, working at Doonside, I was back at Stanmore travelling to Doonside and it was really getting me down. So I gave up work and about a week later I went into see all my mates at Anthony Horderns, who I still kept in contact with, and my old boss saw me. He said 'What are you doing here?' and I said 'Well, I'm just ... you know, I'm not working 'cause I'm having a baby' and he said 'Well are you looking for work?' and I said 'Well I hadn't really thought about it, why?' He said, 'Oh well we're going down the tube fast here and your old area' - which they called the P.O.D. section, Pay On Delivery, not C.O.D but P.O.D - 'we're trying to clear all the outstanding debts and we're looking for someone to do that. Can you come back and work with us?' I said 'Oh how can I go to the hospital and have my check-ups and all that?' 'Oh, when you bundy on and when you bundy off, that's fine!' And I actually worked there till the 22nd November and Michelle was due on the 4th December, and ultimately was born on the 14th December. But my husband was away with the Navy and he came home on the 22nd November and I thought, 'Well that'll be it!' and in that time I cleared up the P.O.D. section and another section as well. So I got everything all organised, so he thought it was marvellous! (Laughs).

### **8.13 So you had how many children?**

Three.

### **Three children. And were you living back up here then?**

Oh, yes. I had Michelle and Darren ... I had Michelle while I was in the flat in Stanmore. Twenty-one months later I had Darren and by this stage we were in a Navy house in Seven Hills. And when Michelle was four and Darren was two my husband was transferred to Canberra where we lived 15 years. And in that time I had another child in Canberra, another boy who's now 14, and Troy was born an eczema asthmatic and couldn't ultimately live in Canberra, so I persuaded my husband to move back to Sydney and he said 'Well I don't care where we live as long as we don't live at Quakers Hill. I said, 'Well if we move back to Sydney that's the only place I'm going to live!'. I had my own Post Office in Canberra and my Dad decided that he wanted to cut out his sick-leave and ultimately retire, so I took over the Post Office from him and he cut out all his sick-leave and unfortunately suffered a blockage in the artery of his leg, which is a long story but it relates back to a War injury, 46 years before that. He went in for an arterial by-pass that failed, he developed gangrene and had his leg amputated. So, it was rather sad to think that for such an able-bodied man that he ultimately lost his leg. But the doctors wanted to cut it off 46 years before and he wouldn't let them, so he had it for 46 years longer than he thought he might have, so ...

### **10.12 So you became full time Postmistress then did you?**

Yes. What happens is, when somebody retires - I had been acting in the position for two years - but when somebody retires they must advertise the office, but I got it on my record and my ability. It helped that I'd been here, but I did get it on my capabilities.

**10.40 And so when you were doing that sort of thing, your children were growing up, so how did you manage with the housework and the shopping and all that sort of thing?**

I'm the sort of person that the more I do, the more I do! A lot of people always say to me 'Why don't you get an ironing lady and everything?' and all that sort of thing, but I always say 'Well I've worked hard for my money and I would like to keep it!' But I'm a person that ... I still to this day hang out a load of washing before I come to work. I always go home to lunch, -even when I worked in the Post Office in Canberra - and bring my washing in and cook tea when I got home from work. Then I'd iron of a night. I'd clean whatever rooms needed cleaning sort of through the week, but one day on the weekend would be devoted to doing the whole lot thoroughly right through, washing floors, vacuuming, and I still do the same thing today.

**11.39 And you're very involved in community activities too like your mother was aren't you? Sporting and that sort of thing?**

Yes. Mum was more into behind the scenes with the schools and things like that. Well I was involved with my children's primary school in Canberra, and also their pre-school. But once we moved back here I'm not really involved in the schools in that aspect. But the things that I'm involved in is netball, soccer, basketball. In summer I still play netball, and I am the highest badged netball umpire at Blacktown Association, but I'm a B-grade player - when I'm well! I coach my younger son's basketball team. They're under-16's and they play Wednesday nights. Through winter I play netball on a Saturday. Night-time in the summer is on a Tuesday night. In winter we play Saturdays. I work in the Post Office five and a half days a week, so I finish work here at eleven on a Saturday. I go home, I get changed and I go straight to netball. I'm there from basically twenty to twelve through to about six o'clock. And I coach teams, I umpire, I play and I also coach umpires for the Association and I badge them and things like that. My first love is netball, and interestingly enough when I was growing up I was a tennis player, because my parents were tennis players. I used to represent the school in tennis and I did quite well, but when I left school it was too far for me to travel to enter into a competition for my age group. I could have gone into open women's or something, but I lost a little bit of interest, but I always used to play socially, and didn't seem to do much. I think in summer we used to go to Auburn Swimming Pool. We didn't go to Blacktown because all the yah-hoos went there. We used to go to Auburn because it was always nice and pleasant, I always remember. If we went to the beach we went to Manly because we could catch a train and a ferry and go to Manly beach. That was easily accessible to us. I learned how to dance, ballroom dancing, at HMAS Narimba. We used to have dancing classes there on a Tuesday night.

**14.27 Was this after you were married, or was this when you were growing up?**

No, no, this is when I was growing up. And for the boys to attend dancing classes it used to be between eight and nine thirty, and you couldn't just walk on a Navy Base - you had to get on a bus and be transported around. You weren't allowed to walk round there at night.

**14.52 How come there's a Navy base here so far away from the sea? It seems strange!**

That was built for World War II and that was Air Force then, but the RAAF's being at Richmond, they decided they would put apprentices in and Navy Apprentices seemed to be the thing, because they had a lot of hangers and things like that where they've got the big workshops, and of course now they've got all that controversy about them going and we don't know if it's going to be a cargo airport or a university, or ... it's just very interesting. I would prefer to see it stay as it is for sentimentality reasons, of course. Yes. So, getting back to present day sport ...

**15.47 First of all, you used to go to the dances there?**

Yes. We used to go there every Tuesday night, and for the boys to attend they had to pay two shillings and the girls would cost nothing because of course boys need girls to dance with to learn how to dance. It was really for the apprentices to learn the social graces, but I mean we learned every dance out and they paid two people who came in from some big ballroom place to teach us. We started off with basics like slow rhythm and jazz waltz and barn-dance and cha-cha and progressed to samba and labomba and we could just do everything! Every dance!

**16.35 Is that where you met your husband?**

Yes. I didn't actually meet him at the dance. I was going out with a guy who could dance - my husband was a terrible dancer! - and he was a footballer and I think we were just more good mates than anything and I used to go to the football with him and always had my eye on the captain of the football team, who I ultimately married! So, once I started going out with my husband, I had to teach him how to dance. He didn't want to be shown up in front of everybody that he didn't know how to dance, 'cause they thought he could do everything really well! So, he never went to the dancing classes for that reason. And he's a reasonable dancer now, but unfortunately he hears his own beat - which is a lot different to other people's beat, so ... (Laughs). And my sister also married an apprentice from Narimba as well.

**17.40 In this area, then, was there very much industry or anything like that?**

No. Only market gardens. Five-acre farms, chicken farms, and basically back in the days I grew up here we had a lot of Dutch immigrants came here in the early 1960's. A lot of Dutch immigrants, and we went to school with a lot of Dutch people, but basically we had Maltese, Italians and Greeks.

**18.10 How did they affect your life? Did they make a difference at all?**

Back in those days there was no such thing as prejudice. They were people that we'd grown up with and still a lot of them are great friends of ours. But the area today leans more towards ... there are still a lot of Maltese in the area as well as Australians, of course, but interestingly enough looking back I think that Australians were in the minority in Quakers Hill way back then.

**Really?**

Yes. And I feel today, we probably are the majority and with the Maltese still, like, we have a huge influx of Phillipinos to this area because they had a very big Phillipino Church here which is conducted at the Community Centre on Sunday. Phillipinos are very religious people and a lot of their lives centre around the Church. So, it's like with Cabramatta, you have the Vietnamese. My sister-in-law lives in Cabramatta and so I have been through that area and I could never see that happening here, the same thing as what's happened there, because most of our shops are controlled by Australians in this area. I couldn't see that changing at all. They have been here a long time.

**19.50 Talking about Churches, too, I was going to say - did the Church play a big role in the community do you think in the 50's?**

In my life, yes. I grew up going to the Anglican Church. A little tiny church that it still is today, but we are having a new one built. I also went to the Presbyterian Church - which is now called the Uniting Church. The Church of England Church was closed the first twelve years of my life, so I went to Sunday School at the Uniting Church, and when the Church of England Church re-opened I went there, and ultimately became a Sunday School teacher and a G.F.S. Leader. And I was a G.F.S. Leader until I married and moved away from the area.

**What does G.F.S. stand for?**

Girls' Friendly Society. And then you have the equivalent which is C.E.B.S. which is Church of England Boys' Society. My brothers were in that.

**20.47 And so the church provided social activity in the area?**

Oh, yes. This was back before the days of television of course. Not very many people could afford a television. And I had 60 girls in my group between the ages of seven and 16 and they loved it. It was rather unfortunate that my girlfriend, who took over the group when I left, drowned, and it just sort of lost ... . But these days, with the Church in the area, we have gone from having Sunday School three weekends and then on the fourth weekend a Church Service. We were always an area under the Diocese of Riverstone. Ultimately then we went under the control of the Diocese of Doonside, and if we wanted to go to Church we would go to Doonside because they would only open our Church for one Church Service once a term, which is three times a year. Now we have Church Service at six o'clock on a Saturday night, two services at eight thirty and ten on a Sunday and we are getting a new Church built. We have a marvellous Minister that ministers just at Quakers Hill, he doesn't go anywhere else.

**22.08 And so just to ask you another question about finances, in your household when you were a child and before you were married and living in your mother's household, who handled the finances - your mother or your father?**

I think they both did together.

**Did they - jointly?**

Ultimately when my mother didn't need to work, but continued to work, my father then controlled the finances. That was after we were grown up of course and my mother went all around the world.

**Did she?**

Yes.

**22.45 She travelled in what, the '50s or ... ?**

No my baby brother was born in 1958, so it wasn't until in the '70s that she really started travelling overseas and loved every minute of it. And so she had been everywhere.

**23.06 And what about in your household when you were married? Who controlled the finances then?**

I have always controlled them. Mainly because Frank was in the Navy and he was always away, so somebody had to do it. So mainly it was because of necessity, because my husband wasn't home, so when he ultimately got out of the Navy I handed everything to him and I said 'Well you can do it now!' and he said 'You've done such a good job, you can continue!' So I still do it.

**Right.**

So we do talk about what we are going to pay and things like that and he says 'Oh, whatever you think!' So I don't know how he'd ever cope if I wasn't around anyway, so ...

**23.40 And being one of six children I was just wondering do you know if your mother planned to have six children?**

Yes. My mother always decided that she would have three girls and three boys, which is rather ironical.

**And she did!**

My father came from a family of five. He was the eldest of five. Three boys and two girls and he's actually lost his two brothers who were both younger than him. He's the eldest and

he's still going. But my mother being sort of ... having the two brothers and having such a broken home as a young child, always wanted six. So it's the way it's seemed to have worked out now is three girls, a six year break and three boys. But my mother lost a little boy when my baby sister was three.

**24.35 In child-birth?**

Yes. She had him when she was not quite six months pregnant and he lived two hours and died. But back in those days they couldn't do anything for premmie babies. They were just too early. And the doctor told her she would never conceive let alone carry for nine months, and she carried my three brothers. I am the shortest in the family. My brothers are well into their six feet three's, four's. Then on my ... my baby brother was born when I was thirteen, but then on my sixteenth birthday she lost a little girl at the same stage. So it should have been three girls, four boys and a girl, but it was not to be. They say one in four is miscarriage and my mother miscarried her fourth and her eighth. So ... it's interesting.

**25.30 And so what about you yourself? Did you plan to have three children?**

I always planned to have four. So I had two children - a girl and a boy - a pigeon pair and I thought I was very clever. Very different to my parents. My father had to wait till his fourth for his son. But I never thought there was enough - coming from a big, happy, close family, and so ultimately when my husband got out of the Navy we decided that we would have two more. It took me four years to fall pregnant and when that child was born he was an eczema asthmatic and he never slept through the night till he was three years old, so we decided in our wisdom to call it quits. But I would have really liked to have had that one more child, but the specialists gave it 70% or more chance of the second child being the same or worse than Troy and we nearly lost him a couple of times, and we didn't think it was fair to him either. So we stopped with him.

**26.38 So looking back and reflecting on the years you lived here in the '50s when you were growing up, and what it is today here in Quakers Hill particularly, how do you think it has changed since the population increased and suburbanisation seems to have moved further out this way.**

Right. I always think that progress is good for any area, but being a real sentimentalist, it's nice to sort of go back to the days when we didn't just have school sports. We competed on weekends against other schools and we had such community togetherness, I would call it. The things I don't like about progress today are that I have been the victim of a few armed robberies in my Post Office, and out of the people - we've had five here - but out of all the people only one's been Australian. All the rest have been foreign - the last was Roumanian. If that's progress it's something I don't like.

**27.52 The lack of security?**

The lack of security.

**What about your home, locking up your home and that sort of thing - has that changed?**

Well, I'll tell you an interesting story. I have two German Shepherds and my house is never locked. The front of it is but the back isn't, because if somebody wanted to come in my front door there would be two German Shepherds there to say 'Hi!'. I feel safe where I live, even though I'm on a main street, because all the people that live next to me and over the road all watched me grow up from a little girl, and we all take care of one another. If there's anyone suspicious or anything we keep an eye on them, and if my little tiny dogs happen to get out, Auntie Thel rings me up and says 'Judith, your little dog's sitting on the front porch!' And where could you get that, you know, these days? You just can't get that sort of thing.

**No. You're really on the outskirts of the Blacktown Municipality aren't you, so that sort of thing probably hasn't changed as much here as in Blacktown itself?**

Oh, no. Well, Quakers Hill is the third highest break-in area in New South Wales

**Really, is it?**

Yes. So, as I said. I feel quite happy coming to work and I feel very happy when I've fed my dogs every night because they do a good job. But I think the thing that is most significant to me having reared two children through their teenage years is the fact that when I grew up no-one had ever heard of drugs. I was a real Beatles fan and I went down the airport and touched Paul McCartney's hand and he went back to England and the first song he released was 'Hey, Jude!' and I always felt that was very significant to me. The next one he released was 'Michelle' and that is my daughter, named after that song. And back in those days, that was the start of the hippies and the flower children. My husband actually went over to America in 1968 to bring back F1-11's for the Australian Air Force and he was on HMAS Melbourne. He drove through a suburb called Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco and watched people picking food out of the garbage bins, which was something that Australia at that time had never seen. He sent me a letter which I kept telling me about this sight, and I have a photo of it. He just couldn't believe it! And the bus driver ... 'cause they all said to him 'You just went through a red light!' and he said 'Oh you don't stop here!' And so it was very dangerous to stop in this suburb called Haight-Ashbury. And years later when I went to America with my mother for a holiday I drove through Haight-Ashbury and I just could not believe it, because Haight-Ashbury had become the world's homosexual town. That's where they all live now.

END SIDE B

TAPE 2

SIDE A

**0.12 You were talking about being in Haight-Ashbury.**

And I could remember the particular intersection where my husband had taken the photo, and I went through it, and I remember saying to my mother 'This is the photo that my husband took back in 1967, here!' And the bus driver said 'Oh' he said 'back in those days you couldn't even drive right through this drive', he said, 'In the end they had to close it off, no cars would drive through there it was so bad.' You know, it's sad in a way when ... I always call myself a '60s child because you go back to when you spend your teenage years, and I had a really good life in the '60s. And then I watch my children go through the '80s, and there's always the worry of someone asking them to try drugs. My children have been very honest with me. They've told me people at school have said 'Do you want to try that?' and they've said 'No!' Luckily they've grown up with a good bunch of kids that have got a lot of common-sense. But you've only got to get one idiot, don't you. And my fourteen year old has been on so many drugs all his life, I don't think I even have to worry about him.

**1.48 So that's one of the things, and what about the changing landscape, you know, the build up of houses and shops and traffic?**

I think the build up of houses has been good. The build up of traffic is terrible because I live on the main drag. As I said, when I was a little girl I used to ride a scooter up and down that road. I also used to play tennis on the road and we'd be drawing the court up on the actual road, and then finally they asphalted it right through the middle, but it still had the dirt verges and there was no curb and guttering or things like that. You know, you try to explain to your kids today - who are living right next to where I grew up - what it was like and they can't really visualise it. The sad thing is today, when you look back then, photos were so expensive and camera were so expensive. So there's not a lot of photos around of way back then. But today, I mean, everybody thinks about it and they just go off and they get their photos, and it's great! I mean I always had a big thing about taking photos of my children when they were little and growing up and I've got them every step of the way.

**3.08 But it was more of a luxury back in the '50s to take photos?**

Oh, yes. Definitely was a luxury.

**You don't remember how much it cost to have films developed I suppose?**

No. I vaguely recollect that I had a Brownie Box camera which I got when I was 15 or 16 and I've got an idea that there was eight photos on that roll of film, and it probably cost me then about four pound, or eight dollars, so it was probably about a dollar a photo. Well, I mean, it's less than that these days. But that was black and white, but you could also get the colour, so I'm a bit unsure about what was what. But I do recollect that I had a set of photos when I was first going out with my husband in black and white that he actually paid for me to get processed, and also a set of colour, because colour was just starting to come in. So that was interesting.

- 4.11 And the other thing is, the changes I like is automatic washing machines, dryers, dish-washers, anything that makes life easier, and they're all the good things. And the only bad things I suppose is with the traffic is pollution, but I can still look out of my office and see trees, and while I can still see trees I'll be happy.
- 4.44 A couple of other things I wanted to mention. One was when TV first started, of course nobody in Quakers Hill seemed to be able to afford a television except my girlfriend's father, and on a Saturday night he used to move his TV out on the front porch and we'd all bring our chairs and sit out there for a couple of hours and everyone would bring a plate and we'd all have cup of teas together and that was great fun! And just thinking about that also brings me to mind that we used to put on our own concerts on my girlfriend's front porch, because she had such a great front porch, and we would always put on concerts. So we were always doing something. But I ... one thing that I'm sad about now, through the wrong-doings by a minority and that is bonfire night! We used to love our crackers. We used to always have a big bonfire down the big park there, and if we didn't we had a spare block of land and we had a big bonfire there and we had marsh-mallow roasts and what do you call them? Jaffles, done in the bonfire and after the end of throwing crackers around we'd have a jaffle roast, and those are the things that our kids miss out on today. I always remember taking all my children to the Royal Easter Show, but especially my youngest. We always go Easter Saturday and we cannot leave the Show until after the fire-works have finished because he's fascinated! When he was a tiny baby probably was when they started to phase them out, and that's sad!

**And that's because some people abuse them?**

That's right. Tying crackers on to dog's tails and things like that! But I thought that was sad to take that out because you always look forward to four things a year, and that was Christmas, Easter, Bonfire Night, and your birthday! And things, you know, have changed for the kids now. I mean, we still make a great deal about Christmas and Easter so ...

- 6.55 And after sitting there with my husband and my 14-year-old son last night watching 'Star Trek', and my son and my husband talking about the future - the future is everything - and I happened to make a comment about the past and they both said 'We never look back Mum, we always look forward!' and I said 'If you don't look back you never can look forward!', and that's just my opinion of course.

**Thanks very much for your time.**

END OF TAPE 2