



Verbatim transcript of an interview with

MARY WALTERS

Interviewer: **Angela Calitz**
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AC: This interview is an interview being conducted with Mrs Mary Walters on Wednesday the 12th of October 2011. The purpose of this recording is to capture the history of the Riley family and the heritage of the Bishop's House. The digital recording is being used to record this oral history and the interview will be transferred onto CD and kept for posterity at the Joondalup Local History Library.

My name is Angela Calitz and I will be conducting this interview on behalf of the City of Joondalup Local History Library. For the purposes of this interview we will refer to the residence as the Bishop's House and we will also be calling Mary, Molly, as that is the name she has always been known as.

AC: Good morning Molly it's lovely to meet you, would you please start by telling us your full name and when and where you were born.

MW: My full name is Mary Walters and I was born in the Anglican Rectory at North Perth in 1920. My father was the vicar there.

AC: Would you tell us then about your immediate family, your parents, and your siblings; give us any details on your relatives.

MW: My father was a vicar, his father he had come out from England when he was about five with his parents; five or six and they lived in...his father was a Bishop at (his) birth he wasn't an Archbishop in the beginning and they lived in the Bishop's House in the Terrace and five children came out and then another one was born and there were six of them in that house on the Terrace and the boys went to what was called high school and it became Hale School ... and the girls went back to England to school, all three of them, and one boy went back to England to school. He went to what school did he go to? He went to Bedford Grammar I think and then one boy the middle son was a Rhodes Scholar, he went to Oxford and my father went to Cambridge.

AC: That's wonderful, okay we're interested to know where you grew up.

MW: Where I grew up?

AC: Yes

MW: Well I grew up in West Perth to begin with, I lived in West Perth until I was about nine I think and then my father became the Archdeacon of Northam which meant that he was away a lot and we had to move from the rectory in West Perth and we moved to a house in Subiaco and my father didn't move us to Northam where

he was the archdeacon because we were all at school. The two boys were at Hale School and my sister and I were at St Marys.

AC: So he kept you in the area?

MW: We stayed in West Perth until I finished my schooling there, so I was there in West Perth until I was 17. Then my father was appointed as Bishop of Bendigo in Victoria then we all moved over there. My brother had gone to Cambridge when I was 15 then he came back and we all went to Bendigo.

AC: And then where and when were you married and tell us about any of your children?

MW: I was married in Bendigo in 1942 and I had a daughter Robyn Mary in 1944 and I had Michael in 1950.

AC: Ok Molly can you tell us anything about your childhood, I know you've told us where you went to school, what do you remember about family holidays and recreation, things like that at the time?

MW: Family holidays were spent out here at Waterman's at an old; we had a beach shack really which my father built and we always came here for holidays.

AC: What did the shack consist of, did it have bedrooms, a kitchen, what did it look like?

MW: It had one big main living room facing the sea and we always laughed because father, where we should've had a big picture window I don't know whether glass was expensive in those days, we had a little window looking out at sea. And we had a big dormitory where we had beds and then we had three cubicles, one for boys, one for girls and one for visitors, where we could, where we kept our clothes and we changed.

AC: And did you often have visitors there with you?

MW: Yes we had visitors. Especially one family, I think they were orphans and my mother always felt it was good for us to have them one by one to stay because they ate everything on their plates and she thought it was a good example to us to see how they finished everything and whereas we fussed a bit.

AC: Yes, okay, now when did you move into this area?

MW: Well I suppose I was six months old perhaps?

AC: Okay and that was here in Sorrento, you would live here?

MW: Waterman's, it was always called Waterman's.

AC: And what was the area like then; what do you remember about it?

MW: Well I remember the cows, they use to come around they belonged to the milkman, they use to come around and they use to trample around the house and make noise. They had no fences and there was nothing beyond us, it was quite a while before they put a white limestone road, eventually it went from us to Sorrento I think.

AC: And that's all there was?

MW: Yes

AC: What about things like doing shopping or going to the post office?

MW: Down in Waterman's there was eventually a shop and it became a post office as well I think getting.. getting... nothing... no... I've got a photograph I saw it the other day. ...there was nothing down beyond there the Waldeck's; the wine people they had a house next door to us.

AC: And would you be able to walk down there or did you have to drive?

MW: Oh, no, we walked.

AC: Walked.

MW: We walked everywhere and father had a Model T Ford and because the road didn't come as far as the block, (he) parked it in Elsie Street, down the side, under a Banksia tree I remember and then we walked.

AC: Okay, now Molly what was on this current block when you moved here, was it just wild bush, your father developed everything?

MW: There was a Banksia tree I think, yes, I remember in the front there was a Banksia tree, that's all.

AC: And nothing else? Did any neighbouring houses go up at any stage?

MW: The Waldeck ones, people there built, the shack

AC: They were the closest?

MW: The shack next to us.

AC: The shack. Do you remember their names?

MW: Mick.

In background: Mick Waldron.

MW: Mick Waldron.

AC: Okay, now Molly can you tell us how you are directly related to the Riley family in particular Archbishop Riley and can you include any dates or places of birth that you can recall. So we go a little bit into the history you told me of Archbishop Riley and we'll do that for recording purposes.

MW: Archbishop Riley was my grandfather, he came out from England.

In background: He was born in Preston I think in Lancashire.

MW: He was. He was born in Preston, he came out here..19...

In background: In 1896.

MW: Was it, 1896. He came out as a vicar didn't he?

In background: No he came out as Bishop of Western Australia.

MW: He was the first Bishop of Western Australia my grandfather, and before that Western Australia came under the jurisdiction of Adelaide, we didn't have our own Bishops and Archbishops.

In background: Hey um, the bloke who started Hale School, what was his title?

MW: Bishop Hale.

In background: Exactly. So he wasn't the first Bishop he was the first Archbishop in Western Australia and he eventually became Archbishop.....

MW: That's what I said didn't I.

In background: Not quite but that's okay.

MW: He was the first Archbishop.

In background: Yeah.

MW: Yeah.

AC: Okay and what do you know of the history of the Bishop's house, do you have any information on when it was built or the land was purchased and what was the house used for, the one that was eventually built here by your family

MW: What do you mean the one here and not the one in the city?

AC: Yes, no.

MW: We have never called this one....

AC: I know.

MW: The one on this block my father built just one big room and he added bits to it and it must have been about 1919.

In background: That's when the land was bought from when I understood so I presume shortly after that I don't suppose you were aware...

MW: 1920, he would have started building it he just built one big room to begin with.

AC: And what was it built out of?

MW: Wood.

AC: Wood?

MW: Yes and a tin...no the first roof was Malthoid.

In background: Was it really?

MW: Yeah, Malthoid. Yes and then we were children we used to have to get up there with buckets of red paint, red oxide, and paint it. Every summer we painted it. It was to stop it from leaking I think and then eventually my father put a tin roof on it. Then we had tin.

AC: And did he eventually add some more rooms onto the house?

MW: Yes he added an ensuite for my parents and he added a laundry I remember, we had a wood stove, we had things called blue flame, they were kerosene stoves

that's right we had a wood stove and we had a kerosene stove in the kitchen and we had this dormitory where we all slept and the boys very often slept on the veranda. And we always had people to stay, we had mother, my mother had eleven brothers and sisters and they use to come and stay with us in the summer and we loved it when our uncles came because they always brought us fruit, peaches and apricots, nice stone fruit we always remembered that.

AC: And you've just spoken about your mother Molly, will you tell us also for the recording you mothers name?

MW: Mother was Lucille Lefroy.

AC: That's before she married your father?

MW: Before she married, her family were pioneers north of .. they had stations up out of now not Meekatharra, Sandstone, they had one station out of Sandstone, and then my grandfather he, what did he do, just before the depression, there was a depression about 1915 I think was it, he unfortunately decided to buy another station, he already had one and he brought another station and then when the depression struck he lost and he had a house down in Peppermint Grove, down in Vincent not Vincent Street, wait a minute, anyway he had a house, Cottesloe and he lost that house and he lost his property in the 1915 drought I think it was, he lost everything and the family ended up with a small farm out at Moora by which time I remember mother said um they were married the first girls were married, no the first daughter was married from Cottesloe and she had a beautiful veil which was made for her in Ireland and made from some sort of special lace and everything and by the time they got to the next two girls they didn't have any money and some kind friend I think um made mother's wedding dress and he was married, where were they married? Perth? I think yes and they left on their honeymoon with a motorbike and side car.

In background: When did they get married do you remember?

MW: I would think that they were probably married in Guildford?

In background: Married in Guildford but when, do you remember?

MW: When? Oh I would say 1918.

In background: How much older than you is Bill?

MW: Four years.

In background: Then that's not possible? Because you were born in 1920 he would have been born in 1916.

MW: Yes.

In background: So they must have got married before the First World War then?

MW: Oh yep that's right, yes.

MW: When would that be?

AC: Early 1900's at least.

In background: I'm guessing just before the war, so 1912, 1913?

MW: When father went to the First World War, Bill was a baby I think? Is that right?

In background: Mmmm, if Bill was 4 years older than you Bill would have been born in 1916 which was in the middle of the war so by the time he came back from the First World War Bill would have been a couple of years old.

MW: Yeah, because I remember mother, when they went to the First World War they left from Albany and Mother went down there to see the troop ships off.

In background: Yes so they must have been married before the war, close to before the war.

MW: Yes.

AC: And then your brother Bill was the eldest?

MW: Yes.

AC: And then what was the sequence of the children and their names after Bill?

MW: Well I was the next one, I was born in 1920.

AC: Yes.

MW: My name is only Mary nothing else and then my next brother Charles Owen, he was about three years younger than I was and then my sister Joan May, she was about 18 months younger than Owen.

AC: Okay that was the five, were there five children?

MW: Four.

AC: Four children.

In background: No no you're getting mixed up the five children, the children were, you asked Mol about the Archbishop so...

AC: That's right.

In background: And the Archbishop had five children.

MW: Six children.

AC: And you were one of four then?

In background: No, no, no, yes, yes, yes, sorry that's right so you were asking about the Archbishop so mum was talking about her aunts and uncles as well as her dad in that group so that was the group of five.

AC: Okay.

In background: Or six? You think it was six?

MW: Yeah, which family are you talking about? Riley?

AC: Riley side.

MW: Six, three boys and three girls.

AC: Yes.

In background: Okay so that was Eric?

MW: Eric.

In background: Basil?

MW: Basil was the Rhodes Scholar.

In background: Tom.

MW: And Tom. Three boys.

In background: And then...

MW: Pauline, Margaret and Gwen.

In background: Okay.

AC: That's good to have all the names. These were the Riley's?

MW: These are the Riley children.

AC: Okay.

In background: You can get easily confused here, these were Archbishop Riley's children of which, what number was Tom? Was he the second, third?

AC: Three.

AC: Second.

In background: He was the second because Pauline was first wasn't she.

AC: Yes.

In background: So he was the second child and he eventually became Bishop Riley and he was the one, the vicar that bought this land first and built the shack. It was the shack that was there.

AC: And do you know the order of the rest of the children if it was Pauline then Tom?

MW: Pauline, Tom, and Margaret I think, Eric, Basil and Gwen.

AC: And Gwen, okay, that's good to know. Now Mike you were telling me a bit earlier about the name of the pool down on the beach front that at one point was it known as Riley's Pool?

Mike: Yeah, the Riley Pool.

AC: Can you tell us anything about that time and what implications it had for your family?

Mike: I think what Angela's referring to is when Owen got drowned down there, that particular story that was in 1952 or 1953?

MW: Fifty three.

Mike: Fifty three yeah.

MW: Yeah. There was some camp up at the top of the hill there, there's a camp and some of the people from there went out in a boat and they got into difficulties and

my brother swam out with a lifejacket on but in those days they put you into the lifejacket but you couldn't get yourself out of it.

Mike: This was a harness, lifesaving.

MW: A lifesaving thing, yes.

Mike: And on the end of a line.

MW: And then he got out to the boat and it somehow must it must have been fairly rough because I remember he had a gash on his forehead as if the boat had hit him when he was out there he swam out with a um...it was on what's it called?

Mike: Reel, a line on a reel.

MW: Yes he swam out to the people in the boat and he gave them that and then a friend of his was standing on the beach and he was just winding Owen in very slowly but somebody came running along the beach and took over and wound it in and pulled him under and drowned him because they didn't realise you had to make sure every five yards or something you could see the heads.

AC: How far out do you think he had gone by that stage? Was he quite far out into the ocean?

Mike: Just to the end of the reef you could see if you stood up. Just down there...

AC: And it was around that time then people would have known it as the Riley Pool, it probably stayed like that for a number of years then?

Mike: I'm not sure if it wasn't called that before then anyway, I don't know, I think it was more the association.

AC: Because of the Riley connection of this area.

Mike: Oh well there were only two shacks here for a long, long, time between north of Beach Road there was only ever two shacks, nothing north, nothing south there are photographs that just show the Riley shack and the Waldeck's shack. That was it and it was just bush, it was later that as mum said there was some other people bought in and around here and there was a camp up at the corner.

AC: What kind of camp was that? Was it for young people?

MW: Yes, it was run by one of the churches. I forget which one.

AC: Did the young people come regularly or once a year to do camping?

MW: Just in the summer I think they came.

Mike: For a long, long time aboriginal kids have been brought from the country and kept up at this place up at the top here called Kumbiyah, they're about to do a redevelopment of it, a sort of high density redevelopment of it. Bit of a shame really.

AC: Yes that's what happens everywhere. Okay Molly, we believe with our records that there was a building around this area that was demolished round about 1960. Do you know what that would have been or who it belonged to?

MW: 1960?

Mike: The house that was demolished before you built this one mum, because the shack was there and then later, so grandfather's shack was there and then later there was another shack built here?

MW: Allan built one there.

Mike: Which Allan built.

MW: Yeah, that was demolished.

Mike: Yes, that shack was demolished to make way for this house.

AC: Okay, how do you feel this area has changed during the time you've lived here Molly, can you go through a sequence of changes?

MW: The thing is I haven't always lived here, I lived in Bendigo and then I lived in Nigeria for 20 years, so when I came back I built this house, I had this house built while I was overseas.

AC: When was that, do you remember the year?

MW: That I had the house built?

AC: This one, yes.

MW: I think it was 1963. About then, yes.

AC: And then you came back from overseas to live here?

MW: Because Mick and I were overseas and we felt the children who were at boarding school, Michael and Robyn, they had nowhere to go in the holidays and we decided we must put a house on this block and that's what we did.

AC: And you used it as a home not just a holiday home?

MW: Well I suppose from then I suppose we used it as a home.

Mike: And when you eventually came back from Nigeria...

MW: I came back from Nigeria in 19...

Mike: Keep going you're right, 1966.

MW: 1966, yes and then we lived here.

AC: Do you have any family stories that you can share with us? I'm sure there must have been lots of fun times. Anything that you remember in particular about the Archbishop, about your grandfather?

MW: Grandfather?

AC: Yes.

MW: Well only what I told you that he always gave us those chocolates after we came from the dentist which was bad I guess. We always had Christmas with our grandparents down in the Terrace and I think some of the children of previous occupants of that house, previous Bishop's, some of them had drowned I think, two, so we were never allowed to go down to the water. We always had to stay up there at the Bishop's House itself but we use to enjoy Christmas there in fact it was very normal really.

Mike: Bishop's House used to back onto the river there's been a whole lot of landfill where the Convention Centre is now, that was all landfill that was put in there in the sixties I think so yes (unclear).....

MW: Water was, it came almost up to the bottom fence really.

Mike: Did the Archbishop ever come out to grandfather's beach shack; did he ever come out here?

MW: Yes, I think he did.

Mike: Because I have never heard any stories of him coming out here (both laugh) but I suppose he must have.

MW: I think he must have, yes but mostly I suppose. He wasn't, I suppose he wasn't really well, grandfather, he really had emphysema or what he had but as children I remember we weren't allowed to be a nuisance, we weren't allowed to irritate him or anything because everybody you know, fussed over him, but when he first came of course he travelled all over Western Australia because it was his parish really.

AC: Yes, did he drive himself to these outlying districts.

MW: No. his daughter, his first daughter was the one who drove and had a car and she drove him everywhere but when he went he had a gold pass for the railways and he travelled up to, especially to Kalgoorlie and places like that.

Mike: Your grandmother was a fairly formidable lady though wasn't she? (Molly laughs). She lived into the, she was still alive in the 50s wasn't she?

MW: She was alive, yes

Mike: Because I remember her

MW: Because I was staying with her you know when you were born, yes.

Mike: And she was up in the hills wasn't she?

MW: No, they had a house in the hills and were next door to the Roman Catholic Nuns and the nuns ...(unclear) decided to burn off some rubbish and then they burnt down grandfather's house as well. (Molly laughs). They had just left, they burnt all the wooden part and I remember just this bit of brick left and my father decided to build on the bit of brick and he made just one room, a brick room, up there. They owned about five blocks of land in Gooseberry Hill.

AC: One other thing I could ask you is, do you remember any impact that the World War had on you while you were living here?

Mike: World War?

AC: Yes, the Second World War.

Mike: It must have had some impact Mum.

AC: Did you have any difficulty getting supplies or.

Mike: Mum wasn't here, she was in Bendigo during the Second World War and as a consequence of that she met a young officer who was up from Tasmania which she probably wouldn't have met if she had still been in Western Australia, so yes that was the bloke you ended up marrying.

AC: That was your husband?

MW: Yes

Mike: And apart from that you were in Bendigo helping out in that particular place and you were teaching, weren't you?

MW: I was teaching and I did a stint with the, what did they call it, we had to record all the planes that flew over and we had little pictures of all the different parts of planes on the ceiling and when the phone rang when a plane was flying over they would ring us and tell us that there was this moth or this ...(unclear) something or other flying over them and we had to plot it on our big map until it got to its destination.

AC: And you had to identify them as well?

MW: Yes, we had to try and identify them.

AC: Very interesting.

MW: We did that and I worked in a, what were they called, every Friday night we served, we had a place we called The Barrel Club and we served sausage rolls and something else, just tea and coffee and stuff to service men.

AC: And what do you remember about your holidays when you came out to the shack here and your mum had to do cooking and provide for the family, how did you manage to do that?

MW: Well I have to admit that we brought a maid with us, I don't think; whether you ought to put that in there (Molly laughs). We had a maid and she had the back bedroom that's right, and we had a live in maid otherwise I suppose she did a lot of the cooking and everything was very sort of very civil and we were all clever at getting mutton fish from the reef. We all got mutton fish, we scrubbed them, we hammered them, we tenderised them, and we ate a lot of mutton fish. Mother loved fishing she used to catch fish out on the reef and so we had fish and mutton

fish and we used to bring quite a lot of stuff with us I remember and there was something about North Beach, eventually there was a butcher, there was a baker called Mr Grote, I know where did I see that, somewhere and I remember him, he had the baker's shop up at North Beach and yes, I just suppose we lived fairly simply we just spent all day on the beach, I remember my young brother after we went back from our holiday out here once we were at Kings Park and he used to get very tanned, he never burnt, he had nice olive skin and we were playing up there in Kings Park with our maid I guess and a little boy came over from another group to play with us and his mother came over and she said "don't you go and play with that little Aboriginal" that was my brother, I never forgot that (Molly laughs).

AC: That was the effects of the outdoor sun (laughter). What did you do for things like perishable foodstuffs, could you bring milk and eggs and things with you or was there somewhere here you could get them locally?

MW: Yes, we had a milkman because his cows as I said used to roam around here, yes and so we could get milk, we had a billycan and I think he used to pour the milk into it, I can't remember where we kept it, then we, I don't know (unclear) yes we brought stuff with us and then as I say mother's nice brothers and sisters they used to come and bring us fruit and vegetables and nice things like that.

AC: You would say they were happy times...(unclear)?

MW: They were very happy, carefree times really then. We used to walk all the way up to Whitfords and we were only just little kids but obviously it never worried mother then my brother used to come with us, I don't my younger sister coming, she said she doesn't remember so maybe she was too small but the rest of us we used to pack a sandwich and we knew in Sorrento there was a fresh water spring where we knew we could get fresh water and we used to get some fresh water there and have a drink then we used to walk along the beach all the way to Sorrento.

AC: Did you ever meet any other people along the way?

MW: No, I don't remember meeting other people, no we just used to wander along and eventually there was a sort of a building, it became a restaurant, I forget what they called it originally. There was something there and we used to walk as far as that in Sorrento and then we used to come back.

AC: And how long did that take you?

MW: We used to spend the whole day doing it.

Mike: Much later when this road was extended to where the BP Garage is at Sorrento there was a roundabout there and that was the end of the road and there was, I think, some sort of a shop there, I can't remember what it was but that was still like that in the fifties yes, so that must have been, I think that must have been after the war that the road was extended, after the second world war the road was extended up there because there was nothing, there was no track not West Coast Drive or any track there when grandfather first built the shack there so it wasn't until a lot later that there was any extension of what eventually was put through as a limestone track here and then went up to as far as Sorrento and it was just bushland all the way, prior to that it was bushland all the way north but after that it was bushland from that roundabout through to where Hillarys Boat Harbour is now and there were shacks built at Hillarys but I can't remember when the first ones went in.

AC: There were shacks along Whitford Beach.

Mike: Yes, where Hillarys is now, it's where Pinnaroo Point is, the shacks were there but I am not sure when they went in.

MW: There were whalers who used to come near to the coast up there.

Mike: That's right.

AC: Do you remember ever seeing them?

MW: No, but we used to walk to a, what was it, a chimney we used to call it, somebody's chimney and that was where the whalers used to come ashore, it was about Sorrento.

AC: Did you ever see whales coming into the bay?

MW: Well I have seen them but whether I saw them when I was little I don't remember that.

Mike: We still see them.

AC: Do you?

Mike: Do you not see them?

AC: No, not on this side, I believe they were in Mindarie a while ago but not here.

MW: Yes, we saw some.

AC: Oh do they?

Mike: They came by, a couple of years ago just around near where the marine research laboratory is around there, there was a couple of whales offshore there for a few days they were hanging around there, and ..(unclear) there was a couple just cruising up three or four hundred yards offshore just down here.

AC: Beautiful, yes.

MW: We thought they used to come up here to have their babies.

Mike: No, but they don't, they have their babies up North and then they bring their babies down with them and they hang around Perth for a little bit so the babies can harden up a bit before they take them down to the Southern colder water.

MW: I see.

Mike: So that's why you are more likely to see some around here because they hang around for that period of time they are not just passing through.

AC: Now, you said you came to live back in this house in the sixties, did you say 1966 that you built this place.

MW: I built it in about 1963 I think.

Mike: Yes, because you were away still, until later.

AC: Now, was the wooden shack still standing then?

AC: (unclear) pulled it down didn't he? ..(unclear) lived in it originally.

Mike: The wooden shack sort of grew like Topsy, it started as one room then grandfather put more rooms on it and a veranda and eventually the veranda I think was enclosed but I don't think grandfather didn't enclose it, it had err

MW: That's my brother.

Mike: A main you could call it central room, dining room, it had a room at one end of the southern end with a fireplace in it, it had bedrooms on the eastern end and it had a laundry sticking out to the north and a veranda out to the north-west. That was the sequence, I don't know if it was exactly that sequence but it was approximately that sequence that grandfather added to the shack, that's what he did and then

then when he died my uncle, mum's older brother Bill inherited it and then in a complicated family arrangement it was swapped and, partly swapped, partly sold to my cousin who was also Tom Riley who was Owen's son. Now when he bought it he actually extended it further, he renovated it somewhat and extended it further so he put another veranda out the back, enclosed the front veranda, that was it and then, and then that remained, oh he gave it in the way he did the finishes of the building he made it look a bit more Colonial that was when people assumed that it was some old Colonial house which it wasn't it was a beach shack that had grown there and then in the seventies, late seventies, early, maybe in the eighties, seventies or eighties it was that my cousin actually did those renovations and made it look like that and then eventually it got to a state of disrepair where he felt that he needed to replace it and he then knocked it down in, was it the nineties, might have been the nineties and built this house, the one with the grey roof over there that you can see.

AC: OK, so that is on the actual spot?

Mike: Not entirely, it used to actually straddle that block and this one in the middle here which has this house that's unfinished.

MW: The middle, it's only on two blocks that one isn't it?

Mike: No, now it was Tucks house, that's Tom, we call him Tuck, that and the middle, what we are calling the middle block here, they were one block but they were, it was a half acre block and so when my cousin came to the decision that he wanted to replace the house he sold this intermediate block here, the one that has this partly built house on it so he sold that to me and well me and my sister at the time, well me mostly and my sister partly and then he built that house on the other, so subdivided at that point and built that house on the other block.

AC: And then did he sell that house or were they still living in it?

Mike: No, no, he lived in it for a long time and then, yes, I was living overseas at the time and then when I came back he decided he wanted to move to be closer to his work so he sold it in the O's sometime I can't remember exactly when in the O's, it might have been was it 07, 2007 something like that, not that long ago. Excuse me (answers his phone).

AC: We might just stop here for a break Mary.

MW: Yes

Tape continues after gap

Mike: The little school at the back here was built in.

MW: Marmion School

Mike: In the fifties and there was an, it must have been built well and truly in anticipation because the houses north, there were houses through to that BP Garage if you go along the coast.

MW: Leave the meeting to go to the bathroom.

Mike: In the fifties and sixties and it wasn't until the latter part of the seventies that that whole area on the other side of Cliff Street started to be developed and it was about that time too that the housing extended beyond Sorrento so it's relatively recently that the northern suburbs that have been developed at all.

AC: But when you say it was up beyond or up to Cliff Street was it not really along this coastal stretch at that point yet?

Mike: No, that's what I am saying. The shacks came through here passed here and went as far as Sorrento and that was it, they all stopped there and they stopped at Cliff Street, they were all nestled in between Cliff Street and Sorrento and the coast, right up until the seventies and then..

AC: Yes, I think they were pulled down in the seventies.

Mike: No, not all there are still some there but basically what then started to happen was new housing got developed from the other side of Cliff Street and then, I think it was the seventies, maybe the eighties, it was the eighties when the area behind Hillarys, where Hillarys now is, that area started to be developed and it was, so you know the development, apart from some spot developments like Two Rocks which came into Two Rocks off Wanneroo Road and Yanchep of course there was shacks at the coast at Yanchep there was pretty much nothing and then it just developed, you know, hugely really in the last I suppose 25 or 30 years that this whole Northern area has developed and keeps developing.

AC: And this is Marmion or Sorrento?

Mike: You are sitting in Marmion.

AC: Marmion, and it was always known as Marmion at that time as well, If people said Marmion would they know it was this location?

Mike: When grandfather had the shack and the other shack was next door to Waldecks they used to call it Waterman's Bay.

AC: Waterman's Bay?

Mike: Yes, and it was, I don't know when Marmion got its name but certainly it must have been around early fifties or a bit earlier because the school up here was called Marmion Primary School.

AC: In the fifties?

Mike: Yes

AC: And that would have been probably after Patricks(unclear) and the whaler which ties in with what your mum was saying.

Mike: I think so, yes ...(unclear) the Marmion, there was a Marmion family wasn't there? Some I think. (unclear) I don't know, you think it was a whaler do you, not a property owner?

AC: I don't know if he lived in the area or just set up the whaling station I am not sure.

Mike: Yes, that's a question worth asking.

AC: Yes, endless research.

Mike: You know they talk about them as though you know a whaling station as though there was a whaling station, there was a whaling station down in Albany there's still the remnants of it ..(unclear) still the factory. All these people were doing was motoring out in a small boat trying to harpoon a whale and you think one a year or two a year they were happy and then they had a small brick rendering fireplace on the beach and that was what was called the whaling station.

AC: OK, right so nothing in a huge context like what we would think.

Mike: No, it was never a factory.

AC: And that makes sense why there's nothing of it remaining today then.

Mike: The Albany operation was started up after the Second World War using an old, what was it called, not a torpedo boat but one of those sort of small support

vessels and it was redundant after the Second World War and they chased around Albany harbour for months trying to catch their first whale (laughter) and they only got a few in their first year.

AC: So it was not like they were bringing in hundreds anyway.

Mike: Not at the beginning, it wasn't until they realised that they were never going to make a show of it doing it that way and then they brought in their first redundant, it was an old redundant steam driven whaler from Norway that was the first of the real whaling ships and then after that they could catch them because they could chase them and the boat was big enough so that they got towed around.

MW: Yes, I mean you wrote a whole thesis on the whaling station didn't you?

Mike: That was an engineering thing so that was the Albany one not this one.

AC: OK, it's interesting to know the history of the one here as well because I didn't know that.

OK, well thank you both very much for your time today, it has been wonderful to catch up on some of the history of the area from people that lived it like it really was, so thank you for meeting with me today and I will be happy to get copies of this to you and some of the photographs as well

MW: Thank you.

End of recording



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