

LIFE HISTORY OF THE SKERMAN FAMILY

Frederick John Skerman was born at Rockangle, via. Strathpine, Queensland, 25 miles from Brisbane on 15th May, 1871. He was the fourth child of Mr and Mrs. Frederick John Skerman who arrived in Queensland in 1866.

A party of Skermans, thirteen in number left England on the sailing ship "Netherby" 944 tons, leaving London, 31st March, 1866 with 303 passengers. The final inspection took place at Plymouth 3rd April, 6 p.m.

The Skerman family group were John, Maria Skerman (Nee Chester) parents, Caroly, Annie (daughters), William, Frederick, Walter (sons), Mrs William and baby Lucy, Mrs. Frederick Jnr., and baby Alice Carolyn. Alfred Darlington (brother of Mrs. F Jnr.), Mr & Mrs Hope Martin (cousins), Baby Lucy, daughter of Mr & Mrs. William Skerman died of convulsions on 22nd April and was buried at sea.

The "Netherby" was wrecked on King Island, Bass Strait on 14th July, 1866 at 7 p.m. The ship was abandoned next day. The cargo including rails for the building of the Queensland Railways were lost, also the tools and equipment belonging to the Skerman clan who had hopes of starting a foundry in Brisbane. The survivors lived on fish and what they could find and food salvaged from the "Netherby", until the arrival of the rescue ship H.M.S. Victoria on 25th July. The ship wrecked passengers were transported to Williamstown Exhibition Buildings, Melbourne. The Victorian Government provided food and a benefit concert at which one thousand pounds was subscribed thus providing a change of clothes and a pair of blankets for each family. The ship "City of Melbourne" was then chartered to take the passengers to Brisbane.

Mr. and Mrs. John Skerman, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Skerman, Walter Skerman and Alf Darlington went on to Brisbane, while William and Annie Skerman stayed in Melbourne for a while. William worked as a boot maker and later as a foundry hand. He joined the band of the H.M.S. Galatea when the Duke of Edinburgh visited Melbourne as a leading cornet player but he and the Bandmaster did not get on together so William quitted the ship and went into hiding. A search party was sent to arrest him and he narrowly escaped by hiding under his sister Annie's bed.

The Queensland party arrived in Brisbane on 6th August and were accommodated at a depot near Victoria Bridge for a week. Then the party lived in a hut built of saplings with bags and blankets tacked on for walls near Toowong Church of England. John Skerman and son Fred Skerman and Hope Martin worked at the Toowong Cemetery for 15/- per week without rations. Alf Darlington worked on the Brisbane-Toowoomba Railway near Gatton for 6d. per day and keep. The Navies went on strike for higher wages and were granted one pound per week without rations.

Soon after arrival John, Fred, Walter developed Colonial Fever and Mrs Fred (Alice) took in sewing to get money whereby to live. Mrs. Drew hearing of the plight of the family offered them her house rent free, if they kept it in repair. The house was purchased by Captain Hamilton three months later and the Skermans had to leave but Mrs. Drew let them live in her own house.

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The Colonial Fever lasted two months and Alice (Mrs. Fred) did Captain Hamilton's ironing being paid 2/6d. per day. When Fred was well enough he went to Oxley and worked for a fortnight pulling corn for 2/6d. per week. John and Walter went stumping at Toowong for 15/- per week without rations. Hope Martin left and went to Sydney. Later Captain Hamilton made his home at Scarborough, Redcliffe and employed John in bootmaking, mending harnesses and odd jobs at 10/- per week, also Fred and Walter as they were still weak from the fever. Alice continued to wash for the captain and also did other washing for five weeks at 2/6d. per day, then later 2 days per fortnight.

In May 1868 Mrs. John Skerman (nee Maria Chester) died, only two years after leaving England. She was never a robust woman and the voyage, provisions and severe experience hastened her end. She was laid to rest in the Toowong Cemetery.

In 1869 John Skerman bought 120 acres of land at Harrison's Pocket and with him went Walter and Annie Skerman. The land was heavily timbered and they named the place "Woodlands". Fred Skerman took the adjoining block of land, 68 acres and built a house of slabs with a bark roof. On the land there was an out crop of rock jutting into the Pine River and the farm was given the name Rocky Angle shortened to Rockangle.

The pioneering years that followed were hard years. The family was as follows:- Alice Carolyn born Enfield, England 16th January, 1866, Amy Constance born Humpy-bong, Scarborough, 2nd September 1868, George Stanwell born 11th December, 1868, Frederick John born 15th May, 1871 (eleven members were born later, all with the exception of Mary May, born 1885, were born at Rockangle).

The family existed on potatoes, maize meal flour, game such as hares and wallabies and fish from the river. Fowls were bought but were killed by native cats, while young pigs were carried away by dingoes. The family by some means grew and flourished.

In the year 1870 free education was set up by the Queensland Government and a school was established in a slab building at Harrison's Pocket by the settlers. The building was used for a school on week days and Church worship on Sundays. One of the early teachers was Mr. Robert McGavin, brother of Rev. Matthew McGavin, Presbyterian Minister of Creek Street, Brisbane. Presbyterian Services were commenced at Harrison's Pocket and the Skerman family attended. The family nominally were Anglicans in the Old Country and were deeply influenced by the Sankey and Moody Revival. Their greatest pleasure was to sing hymns from the Sankey and Moody Hymn books. Frederick and Walter Skerman took a prominent place in the Church where Walter met and married Miss Linda Hay.

The education that the Skerman family received was of the elementary type but efficient for all the family had excellent handwriting, spoke well and were efficient with figures. The discipline was strict and corporal punishment was well known and

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observed. Pupils often played truant and Fred Jnr. was not an exception in this regard.

In 1885 Fred was apprenticed to the blacksmithing trade at Strathpine under Mr Stevenson and while he was learning his trade the North Coast Line was laid through Strathpine. The wages were about 5/- per week and most of this was given to the mother to help with the upkeep of a large family. During this time he purchased a book "Pure Words" which is still in the possession of the family and is still readable. He was at his trade when Frederick Snr. developed Pneumonia and succumbed to the scourge of those days on 7th August, 1890.

Soon after the death of Frederick Snr. the family began to break up. Alice married Thomas Bryant in about 1889. Amy married Mr. Adam Pringle, July, 1892. The Pringles went to reside in the Bundaberg district where relatives Mr. & Mrs. Christie Thygesen, Mrs. Phoebe Darlington, sister of Alice Skerman, the Darlington family and Bryers. Fred set up with the Pringles and worked for Thygesens. He helped to build a sugar mill known "Waterloo" and worked in the mill. The trade mark was a Niger's head on a spear. He worked also at Bucca Creek. A family disagreement broke out between the Pringles, Darlingtons and Bryers. Fred took sides with the Pringles and they left. Fred never thought the same of the relatives, especially the Darlingtons and the Bryers from then on.

About the turn of the century Fred (F.J.) came to the Strathpine area and bought a blacksmithing business from Ruddle Brothers, Terror's creek (later known as Dayboro). The old name Terror's Creek derived its name from a stallion known as the Terror. The Skerman family were well known as Walter had sold "Woodlands" to his brother Fred in 1877 and went to Terror's Creek on a property known as "Uplands". Thus he became like one of the Walter Skerman's family.

During this time he became acquainted with Miss Etta Bulgin, whose father Mr. Lewis Bulgin took up a farm at Harrison's Pocket. The Bulgin family were friends of the joiners of Samsonvale Station and at a picnic to Mt. Samson, friendship sprang up which later ripened into marriage. At the time, Miss Etta Bulgin was a nurse at the Brisbane General Hospital.

On the 27th December, 1905, at the residence of Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Bulgin, Harrison's Pocket, Frederick John Skerman and Etta Mary Bulgin were joined in wedlock by Mr. James Sweet, Home Missioner of the Upper North Pine Presbyterian Home Mission Station. A honeymoon was spent at Tewantin. The best man was Perce Skerman and Bridesmaid was Miss Ethel Bulgin. The couple took up residence in a newly built house at Dayboro named "Hillcrest". It was a four roomed house on high blocks with a front verandah and a detached kitchen and bathroom under the house, very typical of the time in the backblocks of Queensland.

Fred Skerman was very active in Church work at Dayboro and had two Sunday Schools, Dayboro and Lacy's Creek. Then he was Master of the Upper North Pine Masonic Lodge. Thus he often had to leave his bride alone. She warned him he would

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come home and find her missing. It was well known that Mrs. Skerman was a Brisbane General Trained Nurse. One night a man was hurt down at the hotel and a man came up for Mrs. Skerman promising her protection, so Mrs. Skerman left a note "down at the pub". Fred came home and read the note and thought that his wife was pulling his leg, so he hunted through the house and could not find her and was not over pleased. He was in the act of going down to the hotel when she arrived home. The patient had a badly cut wound above the eye. F.J. soon got used to having his wife called out to all kinds of sick cases and accident victims at all hours of the day and night.

"Hillcrest" was an open home with visiting relatives and the Presbyterian Home Missionaries and visiting ministers received hospitality. Mrs. Skerman's sister Dora Bulgin came to live with them and attend the Dayboro State School and was at "Hillcrest" when Mabel Alice was born on 2nd November, 1906.

The Home Missionaries who stayed with Mr. & Mrs. Skerman were namely Mr. Inglis and Mr. A. McAllister. Mrs. Skerman had to check Mr. McAllister from time to time as his romance with Miss Tritton began as a flirtation at Dayboro but ended in reality when he left. Mr. McAllister told Mrs. Skerman that she kept him in order more than his own mother did. Mother's reply was: "Pity she did not do more and I would not have had to do so much". One night Mr. McAllister lost his way home and camped for the night. Next a.m. he found that he was only a short way about 14 mile from "Hillcrest".

Soon after Dad and Mother made their home at "Hillcrest", Great Uncle Walter Skerman sold his property "Uplands" and purchased land at Willowvale, six miles north of Warwick, Darling Downs. His sons Walter and John also took up land in that area. John married Miss Minnie Strain of Dayboro and Walter married Mother's sister, Miss Nellie Bulgin. At the time of the departure of Walter Skerman Snr. the marriage of Miss Jessie Skerman to Mr. J. Sweet, Presbyterian Home Missionary, took place in Dayboro. "Hillcrest" became the head quarters and meeting place of the Bride's family. The Bride dressed there and the relatives assembled. Then to add to the confusion the Bridegroom unexpectedly put in an appearance to dress there also. While using the bathroom, he applied the contents of a tube to his hair and it turned out to be a strong smelling ointment used by Dad for rheumatism, which had to be washed out. Mother was not able to dress and had to send Dad to get some of her clothes, while she dressed in the bathroom. Thus Mother was the last to dress but the bride hearing of what had happened would not leave the house till Mother was dressed and consequently was about half an hour late.

Mr. Thomas Harvey was the Home Missionary appointed to Upper North Pine after the departure of Mr. McAllister and he was a conscientious worker. His bride was to arrive in Brisbane from Scotland and they were to be married as soon as she landed. The Sunday before Mr. Harvey was running a high temperature and Mother implored him not to take the services but he did and then went to Brisbane and was married. As a result he became seriously ill and suffered a nervous breakdown and his bride had to live at Rockangle with Gma. Skerman and a long friendship resulted.

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During the early part of 1909 Mother was called to the Micheal Family at Samsonvale, cousins of the Skermans. Mrs. Micheal was formerly Annie Skerman. An outbreak of Typhoid Fever occurred in the family after spending a holiday at Redcliffe. The drinking water from a well had become contaminated. The people who previously rented the house tipped out washing water near the well and it soaked down. Three of the Micheal family died as a result. Mother was sent for. Mother had the victims separated. Carolyn (Carry) was the first to die, then Harry, a lad of about 19 years. As his funeral left the house, May in a delirium was singing "Hark the herald angels sing". Mr. Harvey and Uncle Fred Micheal had to drive hard on the return journey to be back in time for May's death. Miss Ethel Bulgin was teaching about Samsonvale and because she visited Micheals the parents protested in case she carried the plague to the pupils. The district was shocked by the tragedy and a subscription was taken up and headstones were placed on the graves of the Micheal victims. Fred Micheal recovered and there was always a deep regard for mother in the years that followed. Mother had a few nasty accidents about that time. Mr. Harvey was taking her to a sick patient and in going up a steep bank of a creek a cirsingle broke letting the sulky tip back and she was thrown.

Three children were born during the Dayboro days. Mabel Alice 2nd November, 1906, Frederick Lewis, 16th August, 1908 and Clifford Harold, 23rd May, 1910.

Towards the end of 1910, Day was advised to give up blacksmithing and go to a drier climate on account of rheumatism. He visited his brother Perce Skerman who had taken up property when the Jimbour Station was cut up for closer settlement in the Dalby district. While Dad was there he inspected a farm for sale belonging to Mr. J. Strang and decided to buy the property. The Dayboro blacksmithing business was sold to Hart Bros., also the new house that was built as "Hillcrest" had been sold to the Presbyterian Church and remained the Manse for many years.

Early in 1911, Dad and his belongings went to the farm. He took with him a sulky, buggy, German wagon, forge and tools, also the horses Acorn, Prince and Dolly. Acorn was Dad's special horse which he had for some years. On one occasion he had been down at Lawnton and Rockangle when heavy rain came on and he rode Acorn back to Dayboro. When he came to the usual crossing, the stream was running high and Acorn went in and immediately submerged. Dad grabbed Acorn's tail to be pulled out of the raging torrent and later it was found there was a washout twenty feet deep where there was formerly a crossing. We always claimed that Acorn had been a race horse but whether it was true or children's imagination is a matter for questioning. Prince was a white horse who used to jib occasionally. Dolly was also a white draft horse.

"Kelvin Grove" was the name of the property purchased from Mr. James Strang and was a 320 acres property on the south side of the Bunya Road, five miles east of Kaimkillenbun. About twenty acres was cleared. Some of the box flats had been ringbarked, the rest was brigalow, Wilga Balar, Iron Bark scrub and was on a gentle slope which rose to the south of a hill. The property had a well, windmill, typical bush house, a gable and two roomed building. A skillion was on front which formed two rooms in front. The skillion rooms in front were built of Cyprus pine weatherboard and the two

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main rooms were Cyprus pine slabs. There was a detached kitchen made of slabs and saplings at the back. The place had ceilings of hessian, one glass window, which actually was half a window in the sitting room and other windows were wooden shutters. The kitchen had a dirt floor. Later Dad dismantled the detached kitchen and built a back skillion. Part made a kitchen and had a slab floor. The middle portion served as a dining room with a sawn timber floor and one end was a bed room with a slab floor. Off the kitchen end there was a lean to with a flagstone floor. Three walls were of a blackened iron from a previous house which had been burn down. Here open fires were lit in the winter and Dad often read to Mother and us in the winter evenings.

The Strang family were formerly station hands at Jimbour before taking up farming. Their first home was on "Kelvin Grove" which was called the top farm where the house was burnt down. Mrs. Strang seemed to have had an education, while her sons Felix and Tom could not read or write but could sign their names. An incident took place after the arrival of Dad on the property. The Burton Boys from Rangemore called looking for Tom and Tom was dubious of their intention and hid under a bed. Mrs. Strang interviewed them and a quarrel ensued and some bad language. Mrs. Strang brought a law suit against the Burtons and Jack Bridle, a workman Dad had brought with him from Dayboro who had been at the house was cited as a witness. The plaintiff (Mrs. Strang) made out that Tom Strang lived in terror of the Burtons and Tom said: "No I'd fight them all with one hand." The charge was dismissed against the Burtons and Tom Strang was not game to go home. He had to reside with the Burtons for a while. Jack Bridle was thoroughly disgusted and dreaded the publicity of the case may have got into the Brisbane papers. He was afraid what the Dayboro people would think of his being mixed up with such a case.

The neighbours were a good lot of people. To the west there was Sandy Cody, then Harding Snr. He was a cranky old cuss who waged war on crows and when he trapped any he would gorge their eyes out then let them go because that is what they did to sheep. Mrs. Harding was a dear old soul and the essence of kindness. She was always ready for a talk and a glass of cold water on a hot day. She kept a nice garden. Ern Harding lived at Normalea and was always a good friend. Further down the road was Uncle Perce and Aunt Mina at Waverley, Miles Lawler McKeon (half Chinese), Henney Family, Mr and Mrs. Cuddihy Snr. The further up Koellar Bros., Edie and Bill who were firm friends for years.

Mother with Mabel, Fred and I only a few months came later and with Mother came Grandpa Bulgin and Miss Maggie Costello as help for Mother. Mabel started school at King's Tent a half time school where the teacher was one week at Yamsion (six miles east) and one week at King's Tent. The teacher was Mr. O'Burn an old Irishman, who could hardly speak without swearing. He used to get the worse for drink from time to time. His wife was a kindly old soul and made a fuss of Mabel. She was "a little lady".

The Bell Railway Line had not been laid long. It was a common occurrence for the engine driver to carry a gun and shoot at plain turkey and the guard would stop the

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train while one of the crew got the turkey. It had a very small embankment but sleepers on the black soil. In wet weather mud used to squeeze up between the sleepers. The journey was rough and slow and it usually took about an hour to an hour and a half to go five miles.

Dad's reputation as a blacksmith soon spread and neighbours dropped in to get jobs done. The only other blacksmith was old Neil Beard at the Bun. One day in conversation Dad asked him where he learned his trade and he said: "Where did the first man learn his trade?" Horse shoeing was another thing Dad was called upon to do often. One of the Cuddihys saw Dad use a hack saw, and he told the neighbourhood: "Fred Skerman is clever he can cut iron with a saw".

A herd of cows was bought from Camerons at Moola. Grandpa Bulgin went over to take delivery with Dad and at dinner Grandpa was asked if his teeth were his own. "Oh yes", said Grandpa, and later said: "but they were an expensive set". Mrs. Cameron said: "but I thought they were your own?" "Well aren't they?" replied Grandpa. Two draft horses Boxer and Baldie were bought also.

Things went well for a time, but the water supply in the well gave out. Dad and Tom Strang began to sink a well at the top farm. Grandpa Bulgin came to the rescue to look after the cattle while the well was being sunk. The cattle had to be driven two miles west to the council well but Mr. Harding lived beside the well and felt that he had a monopoly on the water. He grudgingly watched Grandpa water the cattle. One day Grandpa was thirsty so he had a long drink. When he finished Mr. Harding said: "That water is not good for drinking as a dead goanna is down the well" and poor Grandpa came home violently ill. If there had not been too much wind the cattle had to be driven to the King's tent reserve and the water boiled from a well. Grandpa was engaged in this task when Mrs. Martin Cuddihy came to talk to him. When he brought up a bucket full she stooped down to drink. The temptation was too much for Grandpa who pushed her head in. She waited her time until Grandpa became thirsty and was enjoying a drink and she thoroughly ducked him.

Water was finally struck at the top well but it proved to be unreliable. Eventually the cows were sold and a bore was sunk in 1915 by Mr. Baskerville and a good stream of water was struck at 215 ft and to this day it has not failed.

One night Fred Jnr. fell off the end of a form and his head caught the side of the door. He got up crying with his hand to his forehead and blood running through his fingers. Mother took his hand away and his eyebrow fell right over his eye. He had sustained a cut right across the forehead. No doctor was nearer than 20 miles and no horses were handy so mother used sticking plaster and the two ends of the wound knitted beautifully.

At that time Dad had a young pig with a wound that had become fly blown and mother told Fred that he would have to be careful with his wound. If the bandage became loose Fred would make a quick bee line to mother.

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During those years much work was done. The dry timber was cleared back, cultivations enlarged. Scrub falling contracts were let out. Dad employed men from time to time. Amongst them was Eldred Gardner, Bill Reynolds, Walter Skerman (George Skerman's son) and Cecil Done. Cecil came to us a motherless boy. He was working in the district for 2/6d. per week. He said that never in his life did he experience such a rise in wages as when he came to Dad. His wages went from 2/6d. to 7/6d. Then mother washed and mended his clothes and he said he received more Mother's love from Mother than anyone else.

In 1813 a party of friends arranged a trip to the Bunya Mountains, Skermans, Koellars, Heeneys and others and camped at the "Old Mill". I fancy Bunya Nut season was on and a number were collected. Cecil Done was left in charge of the farm.

While Dad was away a former employer of Cecil's called and wanted Cecil to submit to a thrashing like a bad boy. Cecil refused. When Dad arrived home he was met with Cecil and a gun as he had expressed his mind to the other person over the matter rather forcibly.

About this time Dad found a plant of tobacco and he knew boys would be boys. It must have belonged to Wal Skerman and Cecil. He hid it and made the boys write and ask their father's permission before he gave it back.

While Wal Skerman was at "Kelvin Grove", Dad parted with his beard. It was the result of a conspiracy arranged between Wal and mother. Mother used to cut Dad's hair and trim his beard. This day she cut his beard shorter than usual then put a mirror in front of him and said: "You may as well finish it". Wal had his razor and soap ready and off came the beard and a clean shaven man emerged. During the afternoon Dad was plowing near the front gate when Ern Harding came and did not recognise Dad. He said: "Is the boss in?" "Oh yes", said Dad. "You will find him down at the house", but his voice was recognised. Several neighbours failed to recognise him that afternoon.

About this time an amusing incident happened up the Bunya Road. Koellar Bros. always grew watermelons and the patch was continually robbed by the local young lads. Koellars were also horse breeders and at this time had two motherless foals. These foals used to chase people thinking they were coming to feed them. The lads had a good feed of melon then they saw two figures coming toward them in the dark and thought it was Koellar Bros. They ran from the paddock pursued by the foals. One lad ran into a plough and bent the handle. Next day a neighbour called on Koellars and was invited to have a piece of watermelon which he refused to eat. Finally he said he would eat it if they ate first. Then came the story to light that the boys had been eating half ripe melons then after a long run they became violently ill. They thought the Koellars had poisoned the melons and he came to see if the melons were poisoned.

During the early years, Gma. Skerman, Aunt Dora and a number of relatives paid visits to Uncle Perce and Dad. Aunt Lucy came to nurse mother when Evelyn Lucy was

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born on 10th October, 1912. She was baptised in the School of Arts, Kaimkillen where the Presbyterian Services were held every fortnight.

Mr and Mrs O'Burn left King's Tent and a Mr. Hawthorn was appointed. Mabel and Fred went to school. Mother had her top teeth out in Dalby while Emily Heeney came to look after us for a few days.

1914.

This was the year from which I can tabulate events fairly accurately. Early in the year the family went to the Toowoomba Show. As Mother was not well she went to consult a doctor who advised an operation. In the month of June the Kaimkillenbun Church was built and opened for worship by the Most Rev. A. M. McKillop and I have a vague recollection of the event. Aunt Ethel Brown came from Warwick and took Mabel, Fred and Lyn to Warwick while Mother and I went to Brisbane by train. I stayed with Gpa. and Gma. Bulgin while Mother had an appendix operation in the Brisbane General Hospital. I remember going to see her in hospital and being reluctant to leave. Aunt Dora used to take me to Church at the Sandgate Baptist Church where sometimes I sat in the Choir with her. During the time Mother was in hospital the World War broke out.

Uncle Arthur and Aunt Lillie were also in Sandgate at that time. Mother recuperated at Sandgate then at Rockangle and then went out to Warwick where she collected Mabel, Fred and Lyn and visited Aunt Ethel and Aunt Nell Skerman. When the family returned to the Bun many of the local boys had already enlisted in the A.I.F.

At the end of 1914 we had a large scrub fire. The Hill Patch and the Labour Lay or later the Wattle Patch went up in the one fire and it was very spectacular at night. Later corn was planted with dibblers in the ashes.

1915.

It was very early in 1915 that the School Teacher, Mr Hawthorn enlisted and also Wal Skerman and Cecil Done. About the middle of the year I started school at King's Tent and the first cars were seen. One stopped to give us a ride but Mabel hearing of some murders would not let any of us get in the car.

In July or early August Mother went to Toowoomba taking Lyn with her. Dorothy Bertha was born on 26th August. While Mother was away Miss Tessie Cuddihy came to look after us. A patriotic function was held in Yamison School and Mabel was in an item. Dad took all of us but had to ask Tessie to come home earlier than she liked. After that she used to go away for a night and return in the morning.

Mother sent us a parcel with a pop gun and book. At the time Dad purchased a sheller and had a slab hut in the corner near the Hill Patch wire gate. It was a bad year and the corn planted with dibblers in the ashes was not a successful crop.

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Toward the end of the year Millers of Bowenville brought cattle up on agistment and Inga Miller came to assist while the cattle were there. At that time Sinclair Ferguson, a cousin of Cecil Done's was working for Uncle Perce. He enlisted and called to say goodbye. He liked Inga and stayed and stayed. A friendship sprang up and after Sinclair was invalided from the farm and settled around Bowenville in 1920, he and Inga were married in the Presbyterian Church at Dalby by Rev. T. Harvey.

In November 1915 we had a wheat crop and I do not remember the acreage or the amount harvested but the crop was taken off with Henney's stripper and winnower. I remember riding around on a beam end of the stripper and being covered with dust and husk. The school breakup picnic was held at Yamison and Mabel was given the book "Little Bush Maid" by Mary Grant Bruce. It was this book that started the family's love for the "Billabong Series". Finally in about 1940 the whole series had been purchased. Dad and Mabel went to Sandgate and Rockangle for Christmas. Mother and Inga Miller were at home and the family went to a Christmas tree at the Bun. The presents were small. I received a whistle and a bag of boiled lollies.

Rain must have fallen as Miller's cows departed from agistment. Early in the year Aunt Nell Skerman came and paid Uncle Perce and us a visit. Miss Myrtle Snell was the teacher at King's Tent and Yamison after the departure of Mr. Hawthorne to the war. About the month of March a baby of Mr & Mrs. Paddy McKeon died and was buried in the corner of Heeney's paddock where a few McKeons were buried. Two of the family some years before were drowned crossing the Myall Creek when it was in flood. Miss Snell allowed the scholars of the school to attend the funeral. It was the first time some of us had seen a funeral and the clods on the casket and the fact of the burial filled me with horror.

1916.

About April, "Kelvin Grove" was let to share farmers, Mr. & Mrs. Lloyns and family who lived in the house while a Mr. & Mrs. Williams resided in the slab barn. Dad returned to blacksmithing at the Bun while we lived in a house on the west of the township sarcastically called "Paradise Alley" and the next door neighbours were Mr & Mrs. W. Perry, teacher of the K.K. Bun School and an auctioneer who later went to reside in Bell. Mabel, Fred and I attended the Bun School. We were not in "Paradise Alley" long. Mrs. & Miss Peterson left the Kaimkillenbun Boarding House and Mother took it over. Hugh Routley was a boarder and attended school. Dad had a push bike and Hugh learned to ride it and sometimes he gave us rides.

Dad purchased a Worthiem piano in Silky Oak case and there was excitement at its arrival. Some pianist came to see it and play. The ones I remember were Hazel Bonsey, Jess Routley and Mrs Meibusch. Mabel commenced lessons with Mrs Meibusch who used to rap her knuckles with a pencil.

The winter was a wet one which brought the creek down in flood. In August there was tragedy. Dorothy suddenly became sick and on Sunday 20th August her

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breathing became laboured. Rain had fallen and the black soil roads were impassable. The only way to get her to Dalby Hospital was by a push trolley on the railway line by Mr. Meibusch. Mr. Walton, Dad, Mother and Dorothy were perched in the front. The sickness was diagnosed as Diphtheria and Dorothy was put in isolation. Mother stayed with her and she passed away about 3.30 p.m. Monday 21st August. Dad borrowed a buggy with two horses and drove to Dalby and brought out Mother and the little white casket. A number of friends were with us. Kate Coutice was working for us at the time and dear old Mrs Harding Snr. was with us. The funeral service was held in the dining room of the boarding house and Mr. T. G. Allen, the Home Missionary of the Bell Charge took the service. Next day mother went out to the cemetery with a few of us. The cemetery was near the Taylor's property about three miles distance. We took out a wreath of white hocks sent by Mrs. Higgs. It was a distressing visit for Mother but we were very curious about the headstones and glass covered wreaths. A few weeks before Mother passed away in 1965, Mother happened to tell either Lyn, Con or Mabel that though it was so long ago, she hardly every went to sleep at night without hearing the laboured breaths of baby Dorothy, or Dot as we called her.

For some weeks the family were quarantined and were not allowed to go to school. Kate Courtice helped us for some time until she married Perce Taylor. Then Mrs. Stan Newman brought from the Methodist Home at Coorparoo a girl named May Evelyn Victoria Worth and she stayed with us until about August, 1919.

Christmas 1916 was spent in the Boarding House and Mr & Mrs. Allen spent Christmas with us. Lyn sustained a burnt hand with Bengal Matches early in the a.m. After Lyn hurt her hand I threw my matches into the fire. In the shop the whole family had a lucky dip and Allen got a tin whistle.

1917.

While at the Bun I remember two bouts of sickness, one was Cocaine poisoning after Mr. Blakely extracted a tooth. Then early in the year Mother took me to Dr.. Hawthorne and met Uncle George Skerman and Allie in Dalby. After the Cocaine poisoning when I went to Mr. P. Punch (Dentist) in Dalby, he used to put Iodine around the tooth and yank it out. Consequently I shuddered at the thought of a visit to a dentist.

Early in the year trouble developed on the farm. It was not worked satisfactorily and the share farmers decided to leave. That meant that the Blacksmithing tools and furniture from the Boarding House had to be sold and an auction sale was held. When Dad and Fred went out to take possession of the farm they found all the fowls caught and couped up ready to be take away. The fowls belonged to us. Dad and Joe Llyons got into an argument and he struck at Dad who retaliated and let all the fowls out. They darted everywhere. The Lloyns and Williams families came out and they left very soon afterwards.

A dear old lady friend stayed a good deal with us at the Boarding House and had to leave hurriedly when her husband threatened violence. The son Earn Harding came

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and took his parents to live with them.

Just as we left the Boarding House, Dad bought ten cows and a bull from Mrs McDonald at Moffat. They were mainly Airshire breed. Their names were Laura, Beauty, Cheery, Lady, Spot, Tricksy, Rosy and Pride. The bull's name was Kelvin.

Two things with our return to the farm I remember well was a mouse plague, when we caught numbers with a bottle with cheese in the neck, placed over a tin of water. Then Mrs. Paddy McKeown died suddenly. Dad attended the funeral and brought Jack home for the night.

Once we returned from the farm Mabel used to drive Fred and I to the Bun School with the old grey mare Dolly who was slow but sure. We used to pick up children and given them a ride home. The sulky had a box behind the seat where cream used to be carried to the station. Sometimes this box was used for putting children coming home from school. A German family named Lawberg worked for Lawlers and the war caused ill feeling toward the Germans. Mabel was asked why she always put this boy in the box and her remarks were "Good enough for a German". Earl Combs started at the Bun School as a pupil teacher. Aunt Dora and Meg came up about May for holidays bringing a song book and they taught us to sing "Keep the Home Fires Burning". In July, Dad tried to enlist in the army as a farrier and was very disappointed when he was turned down because he was over 45 and a farmer.

The winter had been dry. The heavy ran came about August. I remember waiting for the train and coming home in heavy rain wet to the skin. A rider was passing us and called out: "Are you wet? You look like drowned rats". The Myall Creek was running high and a stream of water came across at the cultivation and ran about a foot deep through the shed.

Aunt Ethel came about the end of September and Lyn started school. In November Mother went to Nurse William's Hospital. She was away for Christmas but sent a parcel. Mabel received a doll with a china head, Fred tin soldiers, I a pop gun, Lyn a doll and then a tea set was divided between us all. Arthur Brown was a baby of about two years and was with Aunt Ethel. Before Christmas a Sunday School Christmas Tree was held in the Church and Mr. Allen was Santa Claus. Aunt Mina and Miss Newton had started a Sunday School. Mabel received picture blocks, Fred a tool set, I letter blocks and Lyn a rag doll.

Boxing Day Dad came home to tell us we were invited to Ern Harding's to a picnic on the lagoon near the creek crossing on the Square Tops road. We stayed for tea and a party then came home. I remember sneaking to bed without washing my feet.

1918.

On 9th January welcome news reached us that Allen Keith was born. It was a great day of rejoicing when Mother and baby Keith arrived home. Early in the year Ern

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Harding's threshing plant came to thresh the wheat and at the same time frogs got into the rain water tank and died thus tainting the water. The tank had to be emptied and drinking water was carted till rain fell. Aunt Ethel left toward the end of January.

Allen Keith was baptised in the Bun Church by Mr. T. G. Allen who left shortly after. The next Home Missionary was Mr B. Wotherspoon.

The corn crop was a good one and threshed by Ern Harding's plant. Dad's helper was Charlie Grant. In the winter a few of us developed Flu and heavy colds. Baby Keith became sick and finally the Ambulance was sent for and Mother and Keith went to the Dalby Hospital. I was sick in bed when Mother left and Fred kept saying: "He will die like little Dot." Edith was a suspect of Diphtheria and the Ambulance was sent out to take swabs of our throats and fumigate the house. Evelyn was later taken into the hospital as a suspect germ carrier. Later Keith's swabs came back as negative. During Mother's absence we were not allowed to go to school. We lived on bought bread (quite a treat) and damper. It was mid-winter and Dad used to read books to us around the open fire. One book we loved and remembered was "Little Women". When that book was finished we were looking for another book and there was a knock at the door. A voice said: "There is someone outside who wants to see you." It was Mother and Keith home. Katy Skerman had driven to Dalby and had dropped in at the hospital to see Mum. Mum and baby Keith came home with her and arrived about 8 p.m. She could not get out of the hospital quick enough and she was appalled at the standard of nursing at the Dalby Hospital. Great was the joy of that night.

Mabel was learning music all the time since the purchase of the piano. Miss Lizzy Woods used to ride around to pupils and then gave up. After that Miss Peggy Watt used to drive around to pupils. There was a change in school teachers. Mr. Perry enlisted in the army and Mr. Robinson was sent then later a Mr. Smith. Towards the end of the year the school was to give a Patriotic Concert and we were trained by Mrs. Meibusch and Bridie Keen (sister of Mrs. Meibusch). We practiced for a long time. Mabel was in a few items. The scholars sang two items by the whole school, "Hail the Land we Love so Well" and "Have you Seen the Picture of the Waiting". Mabel was in "Ten Little Mothers" and "Goodnight". Before the concert was over the Armistice was signed on 11th November. The war was over.

Ern Harding was forced to leave Mornalea and as he was going down to Redcliffe, Mother arranged for Mabel and I to go to Sandgate and have a holiday with Gpa. and Gma. Bulgin then later go to see Gma. Skerman at Rockangle. Aunt Dora and Gma. Bulgin met us in Brisbane. A few days after our arrival Aunt Meg took us to see a Peace Celebration Procession and we saw it passing through the Valley, Brisbane. The streets were crowded and so were the trains going home. Aunt Lillie was then living in Sandgate with the children Marj, Harold (later changed to Ham and Donald). Uncle Arthur returned from England and was released from the Army. There was great excitement and rejoicing.

During our stay at Sandgate, Bert Griffith, his wife Edna and children, Joy, Guy

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and Mrs. Griffith's sister, Mrs. Behan were visitors. Then George and Elsie Bulgin, distant relatives were also staying at Nashville, Hoskin Street, Sandgate.

Christmas was quite a gay time. We went to the Brighton Methodist Church for service. Aunt Dora chased Mabel and Elsie with watermelon rind and rubbed their faces. A few days after Christmas Aunt May drove from Rockangle and took Mabel and I there. The day after our arrival there came a wagon load of relatives, Micheals and members of William Skerman's family and Aunt May and Flo's Christmas mince tarts were popular. A picnic was held near the river and Gma. Skerman arrived in a few days. Before we left we visited Aunt Annie Micheal. We returned to Sandgate and went home by train. Lloyd and Perce came home with us. Uncle George met us and we stayed in the shop in Russel Street while Lloyd and Perce stayed with Aunt Lucy and Bertha in their new place "Rushton", Cecil Street, Toowoomba.

At home for Christmas. Uncle Perce's family and our's met at "Kelvin Grove" and boughs of Apple Blossom were cut down for decoration and they spent Christmas together.

1919.

The year was marked with the excitement of the boys coming home from war. Mr Perry took over duties as Head Master at school when it reopened. We then had horse problems. Old Dolly became too old. A pony Teddy was bought but he was too hard for us children to manage. A brown shaggy pony named Bobbie was bought. He would not let the men catch him. It had to be one of us children and we had to take a bunch of tasty grass or green sudan grass or wheat. He was very slow but very cunning and wise. Dad took on a scrub contract for the Colonial Mutual Society on Sandy Sody's old place. Then Andy Skerman came to see Uncle Wal. He had just come home from the war. Mr. Perry was transferred and a Mr Peter Green was sent to the Bun School.

Jim Gurney borrowed a horse one night, Old Prince and did not bring him back. Dad went to the Dalby Police and found out if you lend a horse without charging the return of the horse, the return of the horse cannot be forced by law. If a hire of 1/- or 2/- is charged, the law can force the return. News must have reached Jim Gurney and Charlie Courtice returned the horse at night. When Dad saw the horse he began to roll up his sleeves and Charlie called out: "It is not Jim Mr. Skerman, it is Charlie. It is Charlie."

Sometime about May or June there was the Influenza brought by the troops returning home and school closed for a while. During the winter Mabel and Lyn started music lessons at Sqauretop and in June there was a Peace Celebration picnic held at Sqauretop and we all attended. A new separator was bought "A Perfect" which was quite a thrill.

Dad also bought some fruit trees and laid out a new orchard up where he hoped to build a new house. Sinclair Ferguson and Cecil Done worked for us for a while.

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Evelyn Cochin left us to go to Thams but after a few years she became troublesome and attacked them violently. One night she became lost in the prickly pear and there was a search party out looking for her. She eventually turned up at Routleys having climbed two dog proof fences. Mr. George Routley remarked: "The fences are dog proof but evidently not girl proof". Later when Mabel was training in the Lady Rowen Midwifery Hospital, a patient was brought in who had her eighth illegitimate child and her names were May Evelyn Victoria Mafeking Cochin.

About October Dad became very ill. Mother always declared that it was a touch of the sun as he had been helping make a tank on a hot day. He was taken to the Dalby Hospital by ambulance. Mother was in no condition to carry on the farm as there were some young heifers which had to be broken into the bails. A man owed Dad the time and would have come to him but the person for whom he was working was not willing to let him go. Finally Mother got Syd O'Mara to help and later George McKeon. When Dad came out of the hospital one of his first tasks was to set up a new butter churn.

About the end of October Fred received severe treatment from Mr. Green at the Bun School so Mother had us transferred to the newly opened Squaretop School and our mail was also addressed to Squaretop. From about 1918 it was our children's job to take the cream to the station 7.30 a.m. at Squaretop on Friday and Saturday a.m. and 10 a.m. Tuesday, then wait for the mail on the 4.30 p.m. train on Monday, Thursday and Friday nights. Miss Giles was the teacher at Squaretop and was a good teacher. We were there only a few weeks when there was an outbreak of Chickenpox and we all got it.

On 9th December, Mrs. Cuddihy was sent for urgently. George McKeon went for her in a sulky. Through the night a baby boy was born prematurely but was dead owing to the heavy work Mother had to do while Dad was in hospital. The little boy was buried in the corner of the pony paddock. Dad made a small coffin and read a burial service from Mother's Church of England Prayer Book. Mrs. Cuddihy and we children attended.

The end of the year was marked by drought. Christmas was a happy occasion with cold fowl, lime juice, nuts and some good rainy storms.

1920.

The year started off with a good fall of rain. Bill and Eileen Cudihy started at Squaretop School. About this time Mabel and Fred heard that old Bobby would go quicker if we drove him in a bridle and not winkers as we usually did. He bolted. At that time Dad was separating and he dropped it to go and investigate. Luckily the gate was shut where Bobby came to a full stop. Early in the year a party of neighbours and Squaretop people went to the Bunya Mountains to get Bunya nuts. Another pony was bought for Fred named Minnie but we had her only for a few months and she was changed for one named Ruby, a Heeney breed the brand JH2. Early in the year Dad started building new cow yards about 1/4 mile up the slope near what we called the hill patch where the soil was lighter and better drainage. It took some months to do.

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A friend of Mrs. Gillies, Miss Fenton had a school teacher friend teaching Miss Fenton at Rangemore who boarded with a well known family. The husband attended a wake or some other affair and came home under the influence of alcohol. He threatened everyone with a gun and the old Mother in Law and Miss Fenton spent the night up the stockyard fence. Each saw a figure in the distance and were not able to move all night. As light dawned they recognised each other.

In May there was a Sqauretop School picnic and shortly after Miss Gillies had to go away on account of illness and there was no school. Then when we got back we caught the measles from the Waverly young folk. Fred went down first and when he was well enough to go back to school, Lyn, Keith and I went down with it. Mother had to take Lyn to Dalby because she had some complications and while she was in there she met Rev. T. & Mrs. Harvey who had just arrived in Dalby. She stayed the week with them. The winter was a wet one and the crops got a good start. In August the new cowbails were concreted and soon we moved the herd up. Dad built a barn beside them.

Soon after we shifted into the new yards a funny incident occurred. Mabel and Fred were trying to get a calf to drink without the finger in the mouth and were not having much success. Mother said: "Let me try". She mounted the calf and it took fright with mother on its back. The bucket covered its head and it went round and round the pen with Mother shrieking on it back. Mabel and Fred could do nothing for laughing. She let the bucket go and the calf got away after an exciting circus performance.

The crops had to be cut with a reaper and binder, a new machine purchased for the occasion and men had to be employed: Mr Archie, Jim Heeney and Charlie Handcock. In the midst of it came the unveiling of the K.K. War Memorial and all the schools in the district had to march and we practiced for months. A band was there for the great occasion. To make matters worse Rev. and Mrs. Harvey, Jan and Jim came out for the weekend to dispense communion at the Bell Charge and they stayed the weekend. On the Monday, Mr. Harvey was helping load a wagon of sheaves when the load fell off with Mr. Harvey also.

Life was very busy toward the end of the year with all the harvesting activities. Mrs. Gillies was leaving Sqauretop at the end of the year and we all regretted her departure. Christmas was a busy time. Our Christmas presents were a book for me, a gold broach for Mabel and a tea set for Lyn. A tragedy occurred a short time later. We were having a party and while the food was being brought a hen went near where the spread was and Fred threw a piece of wood which landed on the table and broke about half of Lyn's tea set. The party did not take place.

1921.

The year began with a whirl of activities. Allen's thrashing plant arrived and after a day's work, a fly wheel broke. Mother had about eight extra men to cook for. A man, Mr. Shepherd arrived to put in the A.W.R. milking plant in the new bails. On top of that Rev. & Mrs. Harvey, Jan and Jim arrived enroute to spend a holiday in the Bunya

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Mountain in Carrow's hut at Monro's Camp. Wet weather came on and Fred and Mabel took them to the mountains.

One morning a woman and her son arrived. Mrs. Robinson and Ron from Yamison at the back door. They had an accident in front of our place and the boy sustained a broken arm. The nearest phone was five miles away so one of us had to ring the ambulance. It was 5 p.m. before the ambulance arrived.

Mabel left home to go to Sunnyvale to stay with Mr. & Mrs. Walter McKenzie, one of Dad's ex-Sunday school pupils from Dayboro. Mr. McKenzie had the Sunnyvale School and was putting Mabel in with a class of his for the High School Examination which took place early in June.

The milking machines were installed and were being given a trial run when the vacuum tank crumpled up. That necessitated another delay.

At the end of January the family moved from the old house on the flat to the barn beside the new yards. It was quite an upheaval. A new teacher arrived in Squaretop. Her name was Miss C. A. Flannighan, an elderly strict teacher. We did not like her as much as we did Miss Gillies and were quite annoyed when she called us a lot of barbarians.

In due time the threshing plant came back and a big stack was made of the threshed straw which was used in the 1923 drought. Bill Grant was the man in charge of the threshing gangs. I do not remember how many bags of wheat and barley the crop yielded but by the time expenses were paid we did not get much out of it.

Stock feed became scarce on the plains about Mocate's Corner and Jack Condon's cattle came up on agistment. Also Joe Comoen's but owing to the absence of wind and only one tank on the windmill the owners had to remove their stock.

About May, Harold Putland, a son of the Sandgate Baptist Minister came to work for us. The month of June came in wet and the creek was running high so Mabel was not able to get to Dalby to sit for the High School Examination.

The black soil near the Bun was so soggy that the teamsters came around Squaretop and cut the roads up badly. They were the cause of an accident on the Squaretop Picnic where the housekeeper of Mornalea was thrown out and Mother was called to attend her.

In September, Mabel's friends from Sunnyvale, Ivy Green and Ethel Hooper came down for the weekend. That year we had a barley crop and it was taken off with harvester.

In December mother took Fred, Lyn, Ketih and I to Sandgate for a holiday. She, Lyn and Keith had rooms at Miss J. Shepherd and Fred and I stayed at Nashville, Hoskin

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Street with Grandpa and Grandma Bulgin. A few days before Christmas we went for a day to Redcliffe. The boats used to run from the Sandgate Pier to Woody Point. We went over on the Olivine and back on the Beryl. Crowds were going over and a few were coming back. The waves were rough on the return journey and we were nearly knocked into the water with the crowd rushing for seats.

During that holiday we met the Bissell Family, as Garland worked for us a short time through the year. The family were well known to G'pa and G'ma Bulgin. Mrs. Bissell was a widow in poor circumstances. G'pa had a cow and a young heifer just milking. He lent one to Mrs. Bissell and went over and milked it for her. One night he was milking the cow when one of the Bissell girls came home with a friend. "Who is that old man?" she asked. "He's the old man who does our odd jobs", was the reply.

Rain came on Christmas Day and did not fine up until New Year's Day. Inland the rain was heavier and Mabel and Dad had a bad time. The Myall Creek came down in flood and their bread and mail was at Sqauretop. Old Charlie Handcock took the huff and left them without notice.

1922.

In the first few days of 1922 Mother, Fred, Lyn, Keith and I went to Rockangle for a week or so then returned to Sandgate. We left Brisbane in the afternoon and arrived in Toowoomba about 9.30 p.m.. We stayed the night at Rushton and found Aunt Nell and Mrs. Walter Skerman who had made the journey to see Mother. Next a.m. G'pa, Fred, Lyn and I went on home, arriving at Sqauretop at 4.30 p.m. on Friday night and Mother and Keith got home Monday evening.

The year started off well. Mabel left in February to go to Sandgate and Rockangle. Miss McErnib was teacher at Sqauretop. In the early part of the year we attended two functions, an ambulance function in Ernie Tuckey's house at Waraga and a hospital dance at Mornlea.

Changes came about Martin Cuddihy and family left Kings Tent as their place was bought by Harry Meyers.

Cars were becoming more common. Harry Newton of Sqauretop bought an old Studybaker, Couchmans a new Chevrolet, Ernie Tuckey an Essex and Charlie Blakely an Essex. Rev. T. Harvey was about to leave Dalby and came out to see us in a Ford car.

We had a corn crop that year and some nights all of us went down to the old house husking corn. Coming home Dad used to point out the planets and various stars of interest.

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Fred left school about April to help on the farm. The first day Lyn and I set off to school riding old Bobbie who was wiser than we. He got to the front gate and went round and round in a circle and would not leave. When we drove him in the sulky he behaved himself.

In July all the Skerman family went to Rockangle for G'ma Skerman's birthday on 5th July. The whole family were together and Aunt Annie and Uncle Fred Micheal were also present. It was the last time the whole family were together. It was G'ma's 75th birthday.

In September Aunt Meg came for holidays and Mabel came home. That year a friendship was established with Mrs. Cecil Done. Cecil had a farm at Moffat. Wherever Aunt was taken those holidays she was taken to see the pigs. Shortly after Mabel's and Aunt's arrival there was a total eclipse of the sun. On 21st September at 3 p.m. the moon came between the sun and earth and a shadow fell on the earth. It became dark. Even the fowls went to bed and the night birds called out. I was the one that went to school that day. We watched the eclipse through smoked glass. We also went to the Bunya Mountains on a trip. Dad, Aunt Meg and one of us in the buggy with old Toby the horse, while two rode ponies. We went a few miles past the old mill to No. 2 schute. It was a beautiful wild place.

Early in November the Bun Church had a fete and it was held at night. We were a very tired family next day. Dad and Mabel took over the Bun Sunday School and Mabel became the organist. Mr Wotherspoon left through the year and Mr Bartz was appointed. He had a very sick wife.

Shortly after the fete Mother and Keith went to Warwick to keep house for Aunt Nell when Ted was born. She spent Christmas in Toowoomba. Cliff Smith, son of Bulgin's closest neighbour came to spend the holidays with us. Our Christmas present was a pingpong set.

This year had brought sadness in a way. Many of our original herd of 1917 and the favourite cows died of old age. This year too, it was a common occurrence on Sunday nights to sing hymns around the piano. Dad loved the old Sankey Book but he said he liked the old Psalm tunes the best. One thing he could not stand was to hear people make parodies out of hymns. Keith and mother arrived home a few days before new year.

1923.

The old year went, the new returned in withering weeks of drought. Dad was engaged in carting telephone posts for a telephone line around Squaretop and a public phone was put in at Players. The new school teacher at Squaretop was Miss E. M. Dowling. The friendly atmosphere which had prevailed among the people there was soon to be broken and the place was never the same again.

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The rain fell in summer or autumn and before winter started we were scorching prickly pear to try and keep cattle alive.

At this time we became friendly with Frank Done who was working at Mornalea. Later he came and worked for us. A party went for a trip to the mountains about Easter. Players, Skermans, Hockands and a few boy employees from Mornalea including Frank.

On the 29th April, Constance Etta was born in Nurse Ossler's Hospital, Dalby. A little midget of about 4 lbs in weight. Before Mother left the hospital, Dad received word that Uncle Alf Skerman died of a stroke while in Brisbane when he had brought Alf Jnr. to sit for the scholarship Exam. It was the first break in the family for 22 years. Mother arrived home on the Friday night and on the following Sunday we had a surprise visit from Uncle George, Aunt Emma, George Jnr., Allie, Vera and Aunt Lucy. George Jnr. had just brought a Buick car.

In May Aunt Dora paid us a visit and stayed a few weeks. She brought an Alexander Hymn Book and we heard "Count Your Blessings" and a number of others. The drought was getting worse and when Aunt Dora went back she took Lyn with her where Lyn attended school.

In the early part of the year Dad had a contract for carting telephone poles for lines being erected and was working with a certain Mr. A. Dad was expecting money and one day he stopped him while he was passing. Dad said he wanted a settlement and was told: "You have got all you are going to get", and tried to drive off. Dad grabbed the reins and put his foot on the step. A. hit Dad so Dad retaliated. He leaned over the wing board of the sulky. Dad pulled up his legs and he fell out of the sulky. Frank Done had been working with Dad and saw what happened. A. was going to summon Dad for assault and a policeman came down to serve the summons. Uncle Perce tried to get the matter out of court but then he found Dad was going to charge A. with embezzlement and an agreement was reached. A. was to pay Dad so much per month. In October a fire destroyed A.'s home and payments ceased. He cheated Dad out of quite a sum of money.

Frank Done and Dad went pine felling. Later in the year Cecil Done, Frank and Dad mustered enough horses and started a team carrying logs to the Bunya Hill. Cecil had some cows so they were brought to Kelvin Grove and we milked them. Good storms fell early in Spring and the rain started the roly poleys growing.

Trouble started in Sqauretop. Miss Dowling was a bigoted Roman Catholic and started giving confirmation lessons. The rest of the school was given a card of sums to work through the whole day. One day she opened school at 10 a.m. and went off with a party of priests in cars to the Bunya Mountains. The school was not dismissed and the pupils had a lovely time for the rest of the day. Parents were angry when children came home with torn clothes and very dirty. I was taken from Sqauretop School and started with the Correspondence School. Soon after R.C. girls came from Bell on Fridays for Confirmation Classes and while Miss Dowling was at dinner the boys chased them with a frilly lizard and gave them a bad time.

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Scandal broke out between two Squaretop brothers which involved a law suite and it was generally believed that the wrong brother had to bear the brunt. Hence between the family feud and school trouble a hostile feeling reined at Squaretop.

Uncle Perce built a new house at Waverley and was completed at the end of the year.

Owing to the drought Dad and Cecil Done combined their horses and started a horse team.

Cecil had some cows so they brought them to Kelvin Grove. Cecil and Mrs. Done went to the sawmill at the Bunyas to live for awhile. Good storms began to fall and we were lucky enough to get a good share and the roly poleys began to grow. People on the black soil planes were not so lucky. Bill Jones and Rupert Newman brought their cattle to us on agistment.

At the time there was a campaign to grow more cotton and we had two patches in at the top farm and the old pony paddock. A granary was erected in Dalby.

In December Lyn came home for the holidays and Cliff Smith and Beryl Smith came with her, also G'pa Bulgin. It was a very happy Christmas. There were a number of storms and it was quite a worry meeting Mother who went to Dalby Christmas eve to do shopping. That year we had bottles of soft drink which was a great occasion for us.

1924.

In January a district inspector of schools came to Squaretop and there was an inquiry into matters as the parents refused to send their children to Miss Dowling and a compromise was reached. Lyn became homesick and came back from Sandgate. She came home with an outcrop of boils. She, Ketih and I went to the Bun School. None of us liked the school or old Peter Green. It was like a living nightmare. Finally a Miss Bligh was sent to Squaretop and in May we were very happy to go back to school.

Mother, Keith, Con and I attended the Dalby Show. Mother came in contact with the C.W.A. and she and a few others decided to start a branch at Squaretop. The first meeting was held at Dalby Downs and a branch was commenced. Ladies came from K.K. Bun and Yamison and brought all the women folk into a common bond which had a marked influence upon the district. Some of the women folk were not very used to horses and the horses used to go on strike. On a few occasions I had to rescue ladies in distress, enroute to C.W.A. meetings.

Early in the year Rupert Newman sold his farm, Bucharoo and bought a Ford Car. He bought a sheep property at Dajarra outside Cloncurry. About the end of February, Dad bought some cows and a red bull from Charlie Newton to make up for the losses we sustained in the drought.

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Cotton picking started in about March and went on till about August. The cotton crop aroused much interest in the district and we employed some men to help us. One day an English boy, Ernie Smith got off a truck and asked for a job. He had very few clothes and mother gave him a warm shirt. Four or five years later he was working at Mornalea and called in to see us and said: "Don't you remember me. I was the chap you gave a shirt to a few years ago." The cotton was a good deal of worry but not very profitable.

About the end of July Bert Barber was our driver on the horse team and he married Kate McKeon. They came to live in the old house. That winter Harold Skerman, son of Alf Skerman spent from April to the end of September with us. We children used to build play houses out of palings but the young pigs ran loose and used to route about in our play places. Harold got the idea of setting a snare and one day he caught one by the snout and great was the noise. When Harold saw Dad coming, he made off into the scrub.

In the August holidays all the cotton picking came to an end and a dance in aid of the Ambulance was held in Dalby Downs Wool shed. Mabel, Lyn, Fred, Dad and I attended. The music was an accordion, violin and drums. It was a fearfully cold night and coming home though we had rugs they were useless as the cold crept round them. When we got home we had to light a fire to warm our feet before we got into bed. I don't think I have ever been so cold before or since. The following Monday afternoon when Mabel came home from getting the mail and meeting the train, she came home with the accordion that was played at the dance. It was raffled and Mabel won it. Dad could play and it was a night of great rejoicing.

Aunt Lucy paid us a visit and later Aunt Mel (Mrs. Alf Skerman) came to take Harold home, Aunt Bertha came with her. When they left Lyn went back with them to get her tonsils removed.

About that time with the promise of a crop and shortage of horses, Dad unwisely bought a Fordson tractor with which to use on the reaper and binder. The work of harvest commenced. I had to leave school with the rush of work and all the stooking to be done. Mother had been to Dalby and had bought a paper back copy of "On Our Selection" by Steel Rud. Fred read it and was much amused. When Dad and Frank Done were stooking Fred would start chuckling and Frank said "What is it this time?" and "On Our Selection" was retold.

A chestnut pony was bought from Bert Barber named Dot and we had her till we sold the farm in 1929.

Couchman's thrashing plant came some time in December and finished on Christmas Eve. Eric Done spent Christmas with us and was with us quite a bit as he worked around the area for a few months.

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1925.

In January, Reg Thorley the mechanic who had brought out the tractor and stayed with us promised he would take us on a trip up the Bunya Mountains in one of Ewings' cars. One Sunday he turned up with a Hudson Super Six, a seven seater and we had a wonderful day. The Soldiers' Road only went as far as Munro's Camp, where Peter Garrow had a hut and on the return trip we saw Gertrude Carbide's Grave (a woman who died in the pioneering days). The story was that her husband knocked up four horses riding to Dalby for help only to find her dead on his return. He carved a sandstone to make a headstone. On side was carved: "This hallowed spot is Gertrude's grave". The other side had her name date of birth and death all in Roman notation.

Early in the year Dad was out with the tractor doing plowing for Charlie Town and was away from home quite a lot. Mabel came home for awhile then went to Toowoomba to assist at Rushton. The C.W.A. were very active and we all went to a dance at the Bun. Dalby Show was an interest and Lyn put in an exhibit. Miss Bligh left Squaretop and an evening was given in her honour at Player's house. The teacher in her place was Miss Ilma Madden and she was a very good teacher.

That winter Dad bought an unused house which was originally Heshets which Charlie Town owned. Dad took it down and carted all the timber. I think he was to pay two pound for it. Our new house began. Dad built it with the aid of us boys and Frank Done. He and Frank were also pine felling in the Bunya Mountains but at times they had to wait till the haulers caught up with them. Slowly the house went up and during the month of September we moved in.

In the winter of 1924 Mr. George Reid was appointed Home Missionary. He was the youngest Home Missionary we had had and was comparatively a newly wed. We all liked him.

During the early part of the year Mrs. Couchman became very ill. She was slowly dying and they could not get a nurse. Mother went to their assistance. Sometimes she drove but mostly Couchmans came for her and brought her back by car. The night Mrs. Couchman died, they had come for her early in the a.m. before daylight. At night about 10.30 p.m. Con, only a baby barely two years old seemed to get a bad dream and got out of bed crying: "Mummy, Mummy" and started running down toward the gate in the darkness. Mother arrived home about 11 p.m. to find Dad with a sobbing child in his arms sitting at the open fire.

Trouble flared up again at Squaretop. One man T...used to run stock about the roads and he found one of his heifers in the possession of A...s who used to reside in Squaretop. He took him to court for theft and won the case. The Wombo Shire Council decided to dismantle a Council Mill at Warmgu and sent T S to dismantle it. The bush lawyer T... did not want the windmill dismantled as his cattle watered there. When he saw T S there he started to throw stones, then he got into an argument with another Council employee and T S came down from the mill and hit T... from behind and almost

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stunned him. T S climbed up the mill out of danger. T... took action against T S for assault and won the case. T... became a very dangerous man after that. Victories went to his head.

After the August holidays I expressed a desire to return to school and with Miss Madden. In those few months I learned more than I did for two years previously.

One day at school there was a heavy storm and a cloud burst between school and home. Lyn, Keith and I had ridden ponies to school instead of driving the sulky. When we got to the creek the creek was running too deep for us to cross. Mr. Fogerty, Manager of Mornalea came along and led our ponies across. One pony had to swim and we would never have been game to cross on our own. As it was, the ponies were almost washed off their feet. A Church fete was held sometime in October, on Saturday afternoon.

Mabel went to Rushton to help but returned for Christmas and shortly after Christmas Mother with Keith and Con went to Sandgate and stayed at the C.W.A. Holiday place, Linga Longa where she saw G'ma Bulgin and also went out to Rockangle.

1926.

The first few weeks of the year were very wet and when the land dried up Dad went plowing for Mr. C. Town. Cecil Done had been away with the team and he was forced off the farm. He then decided to take a job as instructor in the Military and was going to Gympie. The team wagon was sold and Cecil was bringing a spring cart to our place with something tied behind it. The cart was pushed on to the rump of the horse and the horse began to kick and kicked out all the floor boards except the last board. Cecil was standing on the last expecting to jump at a critical moment when hostilities ceased.

Mornalea had been sold to a Mr. Doyle and he wanted Dad to start a bigger dairy on half shares. cows were bought including Cecil Done's herd and another heard and were grazed in Mathieson's paddock on the opposite side of the road to us. In May he started dairying on his own at Mornalea.

About March I started going to carpentering lessons in Dalby but I did not learn much. Lyn had been going in every Friday since February, 1925 for Domestic Science and Dress Making.

The Dalby Show created quite an interest as the C.W.A. Societies in the Dalby district put in exhibits, a competitive effort, in which the Squaretop Branch was involved. Lyn and I were in a competition and it was the last time we exhibited anything. Aunt Flo paid us a visit and went to the show with Dad and Mother.

In May Aunt Dora and Linda Yerbury came for holidays in the cold month of June. In July Mabel went down to Sandgate and was there till a few days before Christmas. She was never at home much after that.

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The boys at Squaretop School tormented Lyn unmercifully and in May Mother put Lyn on Correspondence School and she was studying for the High School Examination which was held every November. She used to go over to Aunt Mina for lessons. There was sadness at Waverley that year, a baby son was born in June. He lived about two months and died and was buried in the K.K. Bun Cemetery.

The weather was dry and Dad could not keep up the payments on the tractor and took it back to Ewings and we resorted to horses once again. Autumn was very dry and we began to loose cattle. The horses became weak and it was difficult to get them to go any place.

Aunt Mary Bulgin and Frank Bulgin paid us a visit about October. Early in November Lyn sat for the High School Examinations and was successful.

At the end of the year the bush lawyer Mr. T of Squaretop turned his attention to Uncle Perce. Uncle had been a councillor of the Wambo Shire since 1921. Mr T was a grass pirate. He went to see Uncle for permission to run some cattle up the Bunya Road. Uncle wanting to help him, gave him permission to go a certain distance. One day he found George, a lad of about 9 far beyond where he had given permission and told him to take his cattle back. On the return trip Mr. T met Uncle and became abusive. In a few days time the impounder came along the road and rounded up T's cattle. T... then made a case against the Council and Uncle Perce claiming Uncle had chased the cattle and a few were injured and had to be shot. We had seen the cattle and Uncle speaking to George T. A new neighbour, an American, Mr. Gideon who had bought Snell's property, assisted in the impoundment.

Mother, Fred and I were called in as witnesses. The Council case was tried first and the verdict was given to the plaintiff Mr. T. Uncle's case came up early in December. We all went to Daly in Tom Strang's ton truck (Ford).

Mischief was afloat. Mrs. T was in the courtroom in a place where she could help her son George when he was in the witness box. Uncle's solicitor saw the lad watching his mother and deliberately stood in the way. Then when he was sure he had Mrs. T removed and had the boy contradict himself in a very short time. A plan was made where one of Uncle's witnesses was to be made drunk so he could not give evidence. It misfired as one witness on the plaintiff's side got too much booze and aimed a blow and hit the poundkeeper, another of Uncle's witnesses by mistake. When Mr. Arthur Lay, the poundkeeper came to give evidence, the magistrate was told that he was assaulted by a witness of the plaintiff's party. The council for the plaintiff said that the witness was told that morning that he was not wanted. "Did he receive a supoen?" asked the magistrate. "Yes", was the reply. "Well he is a witness". The verdict was adjourned till January.

Rain fell a few weeks before Christmas and continued to fall. Lyn was away for Christmas and we had no visitors.

In that year too Fred joined the local Light Horse Troop which had been started

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by Cecile Done in 1922. Frank Done was a Non Commissioned Officer while Dick Player was in Charge.

1927.

1927 came in with wet weather and the creek ran high and there was a general rejoicing. In January, the verdict of the T. and P. J. Skerman case was given in favour of the defendant, Uncle Perce. The Wombo Shire appealed against the Magistrate's decision and won the case. T... had to pay expenses of both. He was quiet for a number of years after that.

In January preparations were made for Lyn to go to Toowoomba Technical College to take a Domestic Science Course. A few days before she left Fred Pringle arrived. He had to take his wife Nell to Roma on account of Asthma and he desired a job to be near her. He played cricket for K.K. Bun vs. Sunnyvale and helped to win the match and became quite famous.

Mother took Lyn to Toowoomba and enrolled her at the Tech College and Lyn stayed at Rushton with Aunt Lucy and Bertha. In late March Fred went off to a Military Camp at Newtown, Toowoomba. While he was there his horse fell with him and his spur was driven into the horse (Dot) and injured her. Fred sustained a very badly injured ankle. He and the horse were sent home. Mother was horrified at the state of his ankle and made a protest to the Military. It took years for Fred to get over that injury.

Early in the year we heard the Mr. Harry Heeney Snr. was very ill. He was a fine old man known for his honesty and was always a good neighbour. In fact one neighbour took a shabby advantage of another and old Harry wanted to thrash him when he chanced to meet him. The fellow would not accept the challenge and was told off well and truly. Mother went up to see if she could help. He was dying of a growth and the old man knew it. Mother went up every few days and towards the end every day. The riding horses were feeling fresh and full of vin. One day mother rode "Lady" Fred's horse. One of our tasks was to water the horses and we used to bring them back at full gallop. The horses liked this and as soon as Lady got into the lane when Mother came home she set off full gallop and Mother could not hold her. The horse pulled up about twenty feet from the gate with a few short props. Mother did give us a lecture. Mr Heeney died about May and about 60 people attended the funeral.

The drought of 1926 had its effect. Finance became very low and the draft horses were old and worn out. To get money the piano was sold. It was a sad night to see the instrument go and there were tears over that. Two horses were bought from Ardy Koekler. One bay in colour "Killarney" by name, was a good trotter and in its habits a scavenger. He loved to break into the vegetable garden and would eat pumpkins. Formerly he was owned by a Lutheran Minister. Our name for him was "Kill". The other horse was a brown, light draft name "Dolly". She also was a splendid trotter especially on the way home.

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After the drought broke early in the year Dad planted the old "Night Paddock" in barley and it ripened before the frosts came. The crop was cut with the reaper and binder. Couchman's Threshing plant came and we had a fair crop. Afterwards the straw was cut into chaff and sold to a firm in Toowoomba who mixed it with other chaff.

In July Mabel started nursing at the Brisbane General Hospital as a trainee nurse. Lyn came home in May with Doris Skerman (Uncle Alf's daughter) and I remember she and I riding up to the Bunya Mountains. In August Nancy Love came home with Lyn. During the year I made the transition from short trousers into long. It was quite a transition in those days.

To make some money we cut fire wood to send to Toowoomba and when Dad went to Toowoomba on business he came home with a "Rexola" gramophone and six records and that instrument was used very much till the wireless came in. During the war in 1940 it was given to the Comfort Fund. It certainly brought enjoyment into our lives. Fred and I rode to see a travelling picture show "When the Kelleys Rode". It was on the silent film.

Throughout the year I accompanied Fred to a few dances. One in winter was held in Johnson's home in the Bun in aid of the C.W.A. It was a cold night and Fred walked the horse all the way home so it would not raise a sweat. After a Sports Meeting he and I went to the Ambulance Dance and my hat was stolen. In October there was a Military Ball when Frank Done came over from Warwick. He had left the Bun area early in the year and after trying a fruit run in Brisbane went out to Uncle Walter at Willowvale. Walter and Ev came over with Frank and while they were with us Tom Strang's truck was hired and we all went to the Bunya Mountains. The old Ford Truck had to be pushed on the steep sections and we got to the top of Mt. Louballen, the lucern patch and the small falls.

We actually had a wheat crop in 1947. Dad brought the remains of Heeney's old stripper and Winnower for four pound and we took off two paddocks with these old antiquated machines. Mr. Lawler took off one paddock with his harvester. The crop was about 219 bags. In December Lyn came home from the Tech for holidays. At Christmas Grandpa Bulgin came and with him were Beryl and Mavis Smith. G'pa Bulgin used to wear a piece of sticking plaster on the end of his nose and while he was on Toowoomba Railway Station a person said "Hallo, what's wrong with your nose?" "Fell down and trod on it" was Grandpa's reply. Lyn and Beryl did some wild riding during those holidays.

1928.

In the early weeks of the year Mother and Con went to Sandgate and Rockangle for a few weeks. In February Uncle Perce bought a second hand Hudson Super Six seven seater car. On the day the Yamison Cheese factory was opened, Uncle Perce offered to take Mother and Dad up. Fred and I rode up but heavy showers of rain came on and the

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cars slipped and slithered much to Mother's discomfort. Lyn went back to the Tech in Toowoomba. Early in March Dad purchased a 1926 Ford Utility for eighty pound. It was formerly owned by the mailman of the Mooney River area which was known then as "the last place God made and He forgot to finish it". It later became the famous oil fields (1960).

Milard Earl came out to teach Fred and I to drive and we started delivering milk to the Yamison Cheese Factory and Dad also tendered for the carting of cheese which fell to my lot and one I was not keen about.

Fred had to go to Rosemount Hospital for treatment for his feet and was there a few weeks. After he got out of hospital he was out at Rockangle and was helping Uncle Joe out of a bog with the Chev car and had his hand cut and it had to be stitched.

Mother had another patient in March, Mrs. Bill Harper of the Bun who developed a growth and mother used to attend her until her death.

That year too, Earl Comben bought Taylor's place and wanted new cow bails erected. Dad was there for some weeks. At this time too, Bert Hinkler mad his famous flight in his Avo Avarian from England to Australia. The "Queenslander" published a special edition which depicted a Kangaroo looking up at an aeroplane saying "Hinkle, Hinkle little star, "Hustling Hinkler".

About April we had heavy rain. Lyn came home for the May holidays and we did not know she was coming. As no one was at the Bun to meet her she went on to Squaretop only to find the Myall Creek was in flood. As she could not get home she spent the night at Players. I rode up to Suqaretop for mail on the Friday night and succeeded in crossing the creek. The water was half way up the horse's back. I borrowed a horse from Players and brought Lyn home. In the meantime G'pa Bulgin came to live with us. Mother was not over well and Dr. Hawthorne told her she had to ease up on work, so reluctantly Lyn was allowed to stay at home.

In May Aunt Dora and G'ma Bulgin were holidaying in Toowoomba and Mother went up to see them and Aunt Dora come home with Mother. Mabel was also home on her first holidays from the Brisbane General Hospital and Dorothy Done came with her for a short time. Mabel learned to drive the Ford Utility under the instruction of Con (5 years old). Mabel could not get out of low gear and Con said: "If you put the break forward it will go". She was correct. That was a peculiar fact of the old T. Model Fords.

G'pa became ill, also Lyn, who had to go to Toowoomba to a Dr. McKenzie. While she was away Dick Player brought news that G'ma Bulgin was critically ill. Mother had time just to dress and I drove old Lizz to Dalby to catch the Western Train and the train was in the station when we got there. Aunt Mina was going to Brisbane next day so I took Con over to her and she took Con to Lyn in Toowoomba. Grandpa was ill in bed on Monday. The Ambulance was rung and he was taken to Dalby Hospital. G'ma Bulgin passed away the day after Mother arrived. She died on 19th September

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1928 and was buried in Bald Hills Cemetery on 20th September.

That year we had a corn crop and also a mouse plague. After the corn was threshed we had a plague of snakes. About ten were killed in a fortnight around the barn.

Uncle Wall and Ev came over in John Skerman Jnr's car (a Rugby) and stayed a few weeks. G'pa was in the hospital about nine weeks. Aunt Meg and Dora came to see him. Then he was brought home and he walked from his bed to the dining room table an hour after he arrived.

While G'pa was in hospital Mrs. Shand, one of Mother's best friends died. The wheat crop was a failure. Fred went to Warwick to help with the harvest. Dad, Lyn and I harvested one paddock with the old stripper and winnower.

Toward the end of the year the farm was thought to be sold and we were even given a farewell only to find out next day the transaction had fallen through. Christmas went off quietly that year and a few days afterwards G'pa went to Warwick with Lloyd and Marj Skerman. They were going over in their car.

1929.

The month of January was at first very hot. Edna Bebbington came and stayed with Lyn. The C.W.A. were catering for the Refreshment Stall at the K.K. Bun races and Mother was helping so I drove her down. It was the only race meeting I ever attended and a jockey was killed in a race. We were to help with the race ball for Ambulance Funds also but heavy rain set in. Toward the end of January, Ketih, Lyn and Con were involved in an accident. They were driving the pony Babbie in the Sulky and were returning from getting the mail from Squaretop when Bobbie shied off the road and capsized the sulky. Lyn was knocked unconscious. Mr. Lawler was milking in the nearby yards and heard the crash and went to investigate. He wet a very dirty handkerchief in the trough and set about to revive Lyn. As she regained consciousness she said: "My God, oh my God." Uncle Perce was plowing at the old Harding paddock and came to the rescue and put Lyn, Keith and Con on old Bobbie and brought them home. Bobbie evidently tipped them out then stood by to see what damage was done. Lyn had some teeth cracked and suffered from concussion with vomiting. Mother spent an anxious night but she was normal next day.

Charlie Newton had a big dairy cattle sale and Dad, Fred and I attended and bought ten cows. The summer months were very wet and it was three weeks before we could take the utility, Lizz out of the gate. Dad went to Rockangle to see G'ma Skerman and Mother went to Toowoomba with Mrs. J. Davis as delegates to a C.W.A. Conference. Marj Skerman was to hold her 21st party but the wet weather put an end to it.

A funny incident took place about this time. Fred was in trouble with his dental plate. He was cutting wisdom teeth under the plate and his mouth was uncomfortable. He was sitting on the rails of the haystack waiting for a load of hay to arrive and I cam

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along and climbed on to the rail. Unfortunately the wire holding the rail gave way and we were both hurled to the ground. My end seemed to land first. Fred began to abuse me even before we reached the ground and he thoroughly told me off. When he finished he discovered that his dental plate was missing and we had to hunt to find it.

Mabel came home on holidays and while she was home Dad sold the utility and bought a 1924 Dodge car for one hundred and forty-five pounds. It was a seven seater and we had that faithful car till 1943. Our first trip was to the Dalby Show and Jimmy Wood the mechanic from Ewings was with us a few days. Mable, Frank Done and I went to Warwick to Willowvale and brought G'pa Bulgin home. During Mabel's holiday the C.W.A. held an evening at our place. Unknown to us the famous Mr. T. of Squaretop was riding past our gate when he met a rider. He spoke to him and the person shot at him. Mr. T. left in a hurray and his hat fell off in front of our gate. Mr. J. Duncan as he left our place picked up the hat. Mr. T. raced home and notified the police. The news reached Dalby before we knew. I was home when a policeman arrived and asked questions regarding the function that was held the night before. Dad and Mother were told in Dalby. Some of Ewing's mechanics told Dad that he ought to be ashamed of himself missing Mr. T. at so close a range. When G'pa was told he said: "Well that man deserves goal for missing him".

Mother heard at the C.W.A. conference of a cripple with rheumatism from Dayboro who wanted to try the Downs climate so Mother offered to take her. Mrs. Fischle was the name. Dad knew them. She was with us for a few months.

New neighbours came to live near our top farm. Mr. and Mrs. Tom Walker, Mrs. Walker was a Heeney and they bought some of Heeney's property. Then Schwerins took up property near Tom Heeney and there was a Committee formed to start a school on Tom Heeney's property which was given the name Russle Vale.

The July Communion classes were held at Uncle Perce's house by Mr. Rogers the Home Missionary and Lloyd, Graham, Fred, Lyn and I became communicants and joined the Presbyterian Church, Kaimkillenbun on 14th July, 1929. Rev. W. M. Maitland of Dalby welcomed us into the Church.

Mother was called out to Mrs. Harry Myres and she brought the 11th member of the Myres family into the world.

August was a busy month, first Fred Bryand and his wife paid a visit and we went for a trip to the mountains. Fred turned 21 and we gave him a party and Lyn was hurt whilst playing two and threes in the moonlight. G'pa Bulgin became sick and Aunt Jess came to help. Our car was undergoing repair and we had to meet her in Joe Black's open truck and a nasty cold spell greeter her on her arrival. Uncle Wal and Aunt Nell came over to see G'pa and was very cold on top and snow was falling. At first we thought it was only petals but it melted when it hit the car and several flakes were on Aunt Nell's black coat.

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Again trouble broke out in Sqauretop with the famous Mr. T. He mercilessly flogged his wife and the youngest boy George went to Players who had the nearest phone and called the police. When the police arrived Mrs. T. went with them to her relatives at Bell. She then took up a case of assault and battery. The case was tried and he was sentenced to a six month's prison term and had to pay her three pounds per week. The basic wage at that time was about one pound ten shillings.

Kelvin Grove was sold in October and the family moved to Finella, Campbell Street, Toowoomba. I went before the others as the Aunts had got me a job with Mr. Blair Todd as a Baker's boy. It was long hours starting at 6 a.m. and finishing about 6 p.m. at night. Fred and Dad went out to Ted Skerman at Pilton to assist with the wheat harvest.

In Toowoomba we became attached to St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church. The minister at the time was Rev. J. Armour. We usually went twice per day on Sunday. In November a week mission was held and Lyn and I attended. The young men who held the mission were Fred McKay, Wilf and Merv Roberts, Jack Scott, Charley Mayes and a young Baptist man by the name of Bobart. That mission had a great impression on Lyn and I.

Aunt Jess saw us settled in Toowoomba and then returned to Gunalda. At Christmas, Aunt Dora and Meg came up, also Uncle Arthur with them. On Boxing Day, Uncle Wal, Aunt Nell and Aunt Ethel came from Warwick and stayed a few days.

About the end of the year Charlie Skerman and several of the family stayed the night with us. He had got into a bad business deal with the old Finne homestead property and let it. He had to move out and went out to a property at Maryvale.

The depression was settling in and the numbers of the unemployed were growing so Dad and Mother thought of getting another farm and they traded in Finella on a farm. There was about 100 acres under cultivation. No house, make shift cow bails and yards, a hut with dirt floors, full of fleas and some material to build yards and a house. We young people were rather disgusted when we saw it. It was an unwise buy as too much money had to go into improvements and the only water supply was a dam. The price of the property was three thousand two hundred pounds.

When Mother arrived a bush shed was put on to the hut as a lean to and things became more homelike. Mother was told that lime helped to irradiate fleas so she sprinkled it liberally on the floor. She was right, they left the floor and fastened on us and into the beds.

Cyprus pine logs had to be cut up for timber and logs had to be hauled. Then Arnie Golder one of our nearest neighbours helped cut the timber. When the frame of the main house was up, the back verandah was enclosed and we shifted in to get away from the fleas. Our neighbours were good. Golder Bros on one side and Jack Muir across the road. We went to a few dances with the Muirs at Lavelle and Millmerran.

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The farm was bought from Jack Smith who had another farm rented about 1 1/2 miles away. On account of the drought the cattle on the other farm was in agistment. The tenant could not keep up with the rent, so rather than pay agistment Smith asked Dad to buy the cows. Fred, Bill and Muirs and Dave Golder went to Duckle near Dalby and took possession of the cows. That night a number were stolen and we were held responsible.

Rain fell in April and crops were planted, about 120 acres of wheat. Mabel came home on holidays from the Brisbane General. Uncle Wal, Aunt Dora and Nell arrived one night and we were puzzled where to put them. Later Uncle Wal and Ev came back to assist erect the house and get the roof on which was done before May was out. The heavy rain set in.

Frank Done came over to work for us again. Very soon after we arrived the Clontarf School reopened which had been shut for a few years. Miss Florrie Smith was the teacher and Keith and Con attended. Then Enid Stirling from Golders went with them. Keith later became sick and it was quite a while before they diagnosed what the trouble was. It turned out to be appendicitis. Mother developed Pleurisy in April and I had to take her to Pittsworth where she was in a private hospital for a few days and was there for her birthday on 25th April.

Mother was with Keith in Toowoomba while he underwent an operation. While she was away a Clontarf School Dance was held in Tom Conway's barn. There was a special musical item which was surely remembered. One of our neighbours known as "Darn it all" Gibson was a very rough and ready man. He became sick and Fred went up to do his milking. His wife was a naive woman but was recovering from an illness. Well the "Flu" left him as suddenly as it came on and he got out of a sick bed and came to the dance. Mrs. Gibson played the accordion weakly and he accompanied her with a violin and he had a hand like a ham on the string. Never did an instrument give such a wail. The two instruments were never together and we danced. She puffed on with the accordion and he put his foot up beside her and sawed away wildly. Mr Funk was saying: "Its awful, someone ought to stop them.", and after a few encoirs the dance came to an end. "Dash it all" went to Mr. F. and very self assuredly asked: "How did it go?". Mr. F. replied: "Very good, very good".

Mr. Muir became very ill the day Mother and Keith got home. It was pneumonia so Mother went over to nurse him and after a fortnight's fight he died. He was a good neighbour and had given us water when the dam was low. Mr. Muir, Grace and Bill were our friends for years. August was very cold and we had over 60 acres of wheat frosted. This had to be made into hay and stacked.

Lyn was the next to develop appendicitis and had to go to the Toowoomba for an operation at Wilga Hospital and afterwards went down to Brisbane. She returned just in time for the wheat harvest.

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About April we joined up with the Millmerran Presbyterian Church. Sometimes we filled the pews. Rev. R. M. Johnson was the minister and he worked Pittsworth and Millmerran together. One of the Elders was P. J. Bailey who was a Lieutenant Colonel and C.O. of the Light Horse Infantry of Queensland. Frank Done knew him well from the Light Horse Brigade. In October a tea meeting was held and the State Moderator Rt. Rev. Robert Miller paid a visit. Rev. John Armour came up too and gave an excellent recitation and Mrs. Walker a professional Elocutionist from Toowoomba gave some excellent items.

Harvest came on and we were forced to buy a Massy Harris Header to take off the wheat and Eric Eastwell from Willowvale, friends of Uncle Wal came to set the header up. It was a good crop but a variety that the Millers did not like and it was classed as feed wheat thus affecting the price. We got somewhere about 900 bags. After harvest Uncle Wal brought G'pa Bulgin over and he lived with us till he died in July 1932. On 27th December we held a party to celebrate Dad and Mother's silver wedding.

1931.

Aunt Dora came for holidays and arrived without her port which went astray but arrived a few days later. Stan Golder was staying with his brothers and was out with the boys and Dad getting Cyprus pine and had a buster off a horse. He was not over well and they took him into the Doctor in Millmerran but he died suddenly. Frank, Fred and I were over at Golders when the news arrived to say that he had died.

Our old E. B. tractor was playing up and while plowing I sustained a bad scald. Afterwards I developed Asthma. Then Grandpa Bulgin became sick and we had to get Dr. Paige out and he gave G'pa only a few days to live but he revived and lived for over eighteen months. Mrs. Muir sent G'pa an invalid's chair which had formerly been her Mother's. Dr. Paige was rather notorious but was o.k. at times. He became unpopular in Millmerran when a boy Reid was helping his father cart wheat and in putting the wagon over the weigh bridge he slipped and the wagon tore all the flesh from the bone down his leg. Dr. P. was sent for and put Iodine into the wound which made the boy scream. Then in a fuddle he ended up sitting on the leg. The men around nearly lynched the Dr. The boy died.

The people of Millmerran were a friendly lot. Surprise parties were the go where dances were held in homes and barns. Funk's barn was a favourite place. The Tennis Club was started at Clontarf. Matches were played but there were a few star players. Then Frank Done started a Light Horse Troop and a little hall for storing their equipment was built at Levelle.

Mabel became sick and underwent an appendix operation in March, thus making three similar operations in the family within ten months. Aunt Jess came up also to assist nursing Grandpa. Mabel's operation was at the Brisbane General.

Dave Golder also worked for us. The crops were planted and we started building

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the new cow bails and new yards. I had to drive the tractor and plow over bunches of prickly pear about 4ft high to clear the ground.

The winter was a wet one. A constant visitor that year was the Sgt. Major Nichol. He came every month or so to instruct the Light Horse Troop and always come to Church with us and he always stayed with us and we enjoyed his visit.

A new Allis Chalmers Tractor had to be bought and the old E. B. sold. A western episode overdone happened in about September. A quarrel broke out between Harold Golder an epileptic and Terp B. It was over an old plow that had parts. Jo. B. owed Harold money so Harold seized the plow for payment. Then one day when Harold went to Millmerran with his cream, Joe and Terp B. went and took the plough and brought to our place. Dad and Mother protested saying we did not want to be drawn into the quarrel but it was too late to do anything as Harold's car was seen returning from Millmerran.

Harold immediately on missing the plow went to B. Bros. place with a gun. Joe wanted a fist fight. He went out and Harold shot at him, using a dum dum bullet on a 30/3 rifle which he kept for wild pigs. Terp heard Joe call out "The B--- has got me and fell." Terp cleared out and came to our place and Keith hid him under a bed. Harold went to his brother's place with a gun in his hand and if the plough was there he may have shot one of them but as George went out to speak to Harold, Arnie and Harold discovered the gun. Harold then went to the police in Millmerran.

I had just been in Millmerran and when I got home Mother asked me to take her up to see if Joe was seriously injured. Dad came with us and we put a pea rifle in the car just in case we had to bluff our way through. Joe when he saw Mother felt uneasy as he had stolen cattle for which we had to pay and said: "Why should you come to help the likes of me?" Mother said she could not let an injured man lie about without seeing if she could do something as she was a trained nurse. She had to cut the leg of the trousers up to see the wound. The bullet went in the inside of the leg making a small puncture but the outside of the hip was a hole as big as a cup. Mother then could not let Joe be moved till a doctor and an ambulance came. I was sent for to get Bob Knight for necessary bandages. Then Mother set about to stop the bleeding. Joe's boot had to be removed from his foot which he said had not been off for a week and as she started to remove the boot he said: "Hold your nose Mrs."

I summoned Bob Knight and then went for Doctor Paige and on the way I met Policeman Oliver Peters and Harold and he told me to bring the doctor out and he did not want to come. The doctor would not interfere with Mother's bandages but gave Joe a needle to kill the pain. The Policeman told Harold he would have to go back to Millmerran and I had to drive both back. When Mr. Peters got in the car and saw the pea rifle he asked whose it was and I said: "ours" and his comment was: "Too many b--- guns about here". When he reached the Police Station Harold was arrested but he thought he was in the right. Anyone was at liberty to shoot a bushranger. Joe was taken by ambulance to the Toowoomba Hospital over 60 miles away and the doctor asked who

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had bandaged the leg because the person who did it certainly did a good job. For months Joe lay in terrible pain as the hip bone and thigh bone were shattered and he would not give permission for the leg to be amputated and finally he died. A case was held later and Harold was committed to an Epileptic Asylum and died after a few years.

During the case the Judge asked who was the first person to reach Joe and when told that it was Mrs. Skerman he asked: "Why isn't she here?". As Mother was 150 miles away she was not sent for. The newspaper "Truth" printed the case and the photos of the witnesses were in the paper. Mother was pleased that she was saved from the indignity. Mr. B. Snr. was a decent old man but he never forgave the witnesses who did not give Joe a good character in the case. He met one old man in the street and said: "Do you know what you are?" "No, no", was the reply. "Don't tell me".

About October a C.W.A. Ball was held in Millmerran and it was made into a Debutant Ball and Lyn was one of them. She made her frock of white organdie with frills. I was her partner. The ball was in Millmerran Hall. The debs were presented to Mrs. Farmer the State President of the C.W.A. Mabel came with them from Toowoomba and Miss Bobby Farmer shocked Millmerran with a bare back evening frock. Long evening frocks had just come in and as we went to the ball, Florrie Smith came with us and her frock got over the gear handle and I had to ask her to remove it. Miss Alice Harding the new teacher from Doneville was at the ball and both Fred and I danced with her. She had a frock of yellow georgette. She remarked how nice Lyn looked and was informed that Lyn made her own frock. We had previously met Miss Harding at Church and one muddy day Frank Done and I picked up Miss Harding and her sister when they were walking along the road to visit Mrs. Hall.

Aunt Meg came up to see G'pa and Eric Done came on a visit and became interested in Tom Williamson's property and finally brought it. His name for the place was "Tightin" (the belt). Mabel finished her training at the Brisbane General and came home about August and went nursing with Aunt Lucy and Bertha at Rushton Toowoomba off and on.

The new yards and milking machine went into action about the end of September and about that time we reached the highest peak in production. It had been a wet winter and the cows were on wheat and we produced over a ton of butter in a month but the price of cream slumped to 6d. per pound. About twenty young pigs were condemned at the bacon factory as having T.B. A stock inspector came up and inspected the herd and found six cows with T.B. and they had to be destroyed. The week before in a wild thunder storm two cows were struck with lightning. The wheat crop was not good. We would have lost the farm only for the Moratorium Act where in cases owing to the depression mortgagees could not foreclose. 1931 was not a good year financially. During the last few days of the old year I went down to Nundah and Brisbane for a visit and I had not been down since 1921.

1932.

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The New Year set in with a heat wave and grass which had been green and high dried yellow thus creating a great fire hazard. Frank Done had to go into Hospital with Appendicitis

Early in February Mabel went to Brisbane. Florrie Smith was transferred with Miss Shelly and came to Clontarf and was on the train when I returned from Brisbane. She boarded with us for over a year. February was the month of our big blaze. A calf died and Fred went to burn it but a whirlwind caught the fire and it got into Rhodes grass and clumps of prickly pear which had years of old grass around them. The fire could not be stopped. The Cacto Blastis were doing a good job on the pear and some clumps were half dead and the fire did a good job. The neighbours from all around came to help check the fire. Tractors and ploughs made furrows and breaks were back fired. Luckily the fire was checked on our own property but we lost over 200 acres of grass. The neighbours did not suffer. The fire really turned out to be a blessing as in one paddock there had been a bad scrub fire in the first place and there were lots of prickly pear through which it was hard to get through on horseback and especially to get cows and calves out. After the fire a cultivation was made there.

When we came home feeling very tired and exhausted, Grandpa said: "Did Fred burn the calf?"

After the fire the dam went dry and all the cattle had to be watered at Muirs and water had to be carried for pigs and the dairy.

The Millmerran Church was separated from Pittsworth and was made a Home Mission Station. Supply was sent out in the person of Mr. Watkinson a Methodist Minister who was recovering from a breakdown. Weekly services were started where previously one in three weeks were held. In May a full time Home Missionary was sent. Mr. T. Simpson, a young Scotsman a cousin of the McKay family. He was earnest and enthusiastic and a Christian Endeavour meeting was held in our house firstly. Clarks from Captain's Mountain came over. Then we went to Funk's place and others. Most of our time was then devoted to Church work and we did not go to as many dances as petrol and money had to stretch a long way.

Uncle Arthur Bulgin went to Sydney to his wife's people and a quarrel ensued and he had to leave. The depression had started so he had to "clear out". He lived with us for about six months. G'pa Bulgin died on 9th July while Lyn was putting him to bed. She left him on a chair and he fell. A policeman and doctor had to be contacted to give a death certificate. It happened on a Saturday night about 5 p.m. Aunt Dora was away on a tour of North Queensland at the time.

Uncle Wal and Aunt Nel came over and the funeral left the house on Monday for

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the Millmerran Cemetery. Golder's utility served as a hearse. Tommy Simpson officiated at the grave side. Mother was fairly run down as she had over 18 months of broken sleep and Lyn had not been well since her appendix operation. Soon after G'pa's death, Mr. & Mrs. Bailey asked Mother out to Glenferrie where she stayed for a week or fortnight. Mother said to see the Baileys at their best was in their home.

Our acquaintance with Miss Alice Harding grew as she came out for a few weekends and attended some of the Endeavour Meetings. Lyn could play only a few hymns and started learning more Alexander hymns so we could have fresh ones at the meetings. Alice left Conways and went to live with Mrs. Jack Peardon and came to Church and Endeavour meetings.

While the dam was dry over six feet of silt was scooped out and moved. Dad and the Golder boys did the job. Dad nearly had a serious accident. The tractor ran back and dropped six feet with Dad on it. Luckily it did not capsize.

G'ma Skerman's 85th birthday was held in July and there was a family gathering. Dad went and was away about a fortnight.

In September a week's mission was held in the Millmerran Church. The speakers were Wilf Faulkener, H. Wilson who was also soloist and we heard "Have You Heard the Story of the Cross", for the first time. Soon after Tommy Simpson gave up Home Mission work and was accepted by the Sudan Interior Mission. We young folk were very grieved at his departure. Mr. Watkinson came back to Millmerran. That year we had not wheat crop and financially it was bad. Joan Bulgin and Mary Corrigan came for the Christmas Holidays also Stan and Cecil Skerman.

1933.

Good storms fell in January and the dam was practically filled but the year was a hard one as far as L.S.D. was concerned. All the spare money had to go into kerosene to get the land ready for crops. We had a small patch of peanuts for our own use which were boiled and roasted and we had gorges of them. Miss Gladys Bryans and her sister Mrs. Clark visited Eric Done and came over for several musical evenings. They were very musical and had good voices and sang in parts. One Sunday they sang "Who Could It Be" in Church. The old Dodge car broke down. It was patched up but it did not last long. Con became ill and we knew she had appendicitis. Money was low but Mother took her to Toowoomba and she had the operation at Rushton. Mabel was there to assist. In the meantime Mabel had completed her training at the Lady Bowen Hospital and came home. Tommy Simpson came for a week before he left for Ethiopia. I drove him out to Koorangarra for his farewell service. A new Home Missionary, Mr. D. H. Henry was appointed. It was his first charge and he was very nervous but he settled down and did a very good job.

Again the old Dodge broke down and we were without a car for five or six weeks. Went out to Bailey's for the shearing. A disagreement broke out between us and the

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Golders and we did not use the shortcut for about 7 months.

Eric Done and Gladys Bryans were married and set up house at Taunton. Mrs. Clark came with them. The Millmerran Guild had a Tea Meeting and Gladys and Mrs. Clark provided musical items.

I became sick in October and had to go to Dr. McKenzie who said I had Asthma and from then on I had to give up tractor work. Rev. J. Armour came up for a week night Communion Service and we had heavy rain but we put chains on the car and got through. Next a.m. we found leaves off the springs of the car broken.

On the next day Rev. J. Armour had two weddings, something most unusual for Millmerran. One marriage was a middle aged business woman well known in the town. She kept a drapery shop. The wedding was to be quiet but the news leaked out. One person went round the town saying: "I'll see you tonight at the Presbyterian Church at 7 p.m.". Consequently the Church was crowded and the couple were well tin canned after the ceremony.

The wheat crop was a good one but we had bad weather to take it off. 1,200 bags were harvested but the price was poor. At the end of the year Harold Golder's place was sold and bought by Rolly Greenwood. Uncle Arthur who had been living with us since April and growing vegetables started selling them in Millmerran. Nancy Love and Mr. Henry spent Christmas with us. Mabel who had been at Rushton came home for a few weeks.

1934.

Mabel was delayed a few days in returning to Toowoomba as the Condamine River was in flood and the railway line was submerged. Then when she did get back she had to be a special nurse to Ted Skerman who came in with Pneumonia with complications. Later he had to be shifted to Warwick and Mabel went with him and was there till April.

An event of great importance for the clan was the marriage of Laurie Benn to Marj Skerman in the Dalby Presbyterian Church. Dad, Mother, Lyn and I went over and Mr Henry came for the trip. We rose early in the a.m. to get to Dalby by 10 a.m. We arrived home at 4 p.m.

Miss Laing the Organising Secretary of the P.W.M.U. of Queensland paid Millmerran a visit and she stayed a few days with us. She had been a Missionary in Korea for over 30 years. We expected a rather sanctimonious person but she was not and we enjoyed her visit very much. Lyn went to Assembly as a guest of the Henry family. While she was away Alice Harding developed Pneumonia. On Sunday a.m. Tom Pearden came to Mother and Mother went down and insisted that Alice be moved to the Pittsworth Private Hospital. The ambulance was sent for and Mother stayed with her till the ambulance arrived late in the afternoon and Mr Brinkworth The Station Master came

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down in the ambulance as well. I went down in the car and waited till the ambulance arrived then took Mother and Mr. Brinkworth back. Mother then telephoned Mr. Henry in Brisbane and he went to break the news to Mr. & Mrs. Harding. Then they went to Pittsworth. Alice was critically ill and only for Mother's action of having her removed to Pittsworth she probably would not have got through the attack of Double Pneumonia. When Alice recovered she went to Brisbane and Mr. Harding insisted on a transfer to Brisbane.

Lyn came home from Assembly. Mabel was home also but she was sent for to the McGlynn family near Brookstead. Mr. McGlynn developed Pneumonia and Mrs. was a nerve case. She blamed her daughter Joan because she persuaded her father to take her to a dance when he had a heavy cold. A furious driver came for Mabel. It was a touchy case as Mrs. McGlynn vowed if anything happened to Mr. McGlynn she would kill Joan. It was touch and go but they managed to pull him through. Mabel gained the confidence of Mrs. McGlynn. A sister from the C.W.A. Hospital in Millmerran relieved at times and on one trip the driver drove at such a pace that she had her rosary beads in her hands but was too afraid to pray.

Joyce Moore came to live in Millmerran and she and Lyn became friends and sometimes she came out to stay with us.

About September Mabel heard of a business in Tenterfield and went down to investigate. She and Vera Roden went into business on a partnership basis at St. Gerard's Hospital starting in November.

The Moderator. Rt. Rev. W. Laurie and Mrs. Laurie paid Millmerran a visit and stayed a few nights with us. France Saunders a friend of Mabel's was also with us at the time. Mrs. Henry Snr. was also in Millmerran.

The harvest was a good one but as the dam had gone dry work was made harder as cattle had to be watered and water was carted as well. One a.m. I had rushed into Millmerran with the cream and did the shopping. I had to get a load of water. Old Choo the slow old draft horse was obstinate at times. I drove her through a wire gate but before I could get back on the cart she started to buck and ended in pushing the cart right through the wire gate. Needless to say I said some not pleasant sounding things about her.

One night in December the Lavelle Guild had a Christmas Tree. It was a public affair and Joyce Moore was with us so we all went except Dad. The weather looked stormy but we took no notice and were only at the Lavelle hall a little while when a very heavy storm came down and it poured till after midnight. People were going around saying: "I told you we should not have come". Fred, Keith and I put the chains on the car then carried Lyn, Joyce and Mother to the car over the mud and we began the trip home. Just past the Clontarf School we came to a gully in flood right over the fences. Keith and I followed the gully and jumped it at a narrow place. As we were walking up the lane towards the house with our trousers rolled to the knees with mud well over our

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shoes, Keith remarked: "Well I would not have missed tonight for anything". Dad in the meantime had caught old Chess and went to meet us. He brought the stranded ones home. We got into bed as the dawn was breaking. Despite the heavy storm the dam was not filled.

At Christmas we had more heavy rain which filled the dam. In fact there was so much water the dam could have been filled a dozen times. A few days after Christmas Mother and Con left for a visit to Tenterfield. Alice Harding came up to stay with Lyn.

Mother and Con came home from Tenterfield and we had a visit from the Willowvale folk who had sold their farm and were buying some of the Bon Jean estates in the Dalby district. We had a good crop of corn that year but as it ripened wild pigs began to attack it so we had to hasten the corn pulling. Lyn went for a while to Tenterfield to help Mabel. Miss Laing paid Millmerran another visit and when she left I went with her to a P.F.A. Camp at Murphy's Creek.

Mr. Henry was transferred to Murphy's Creek and Mr. E. N. Johnstone was appointed to Millmerran. A person who at one time had an ulcer and thought that everyone else had one. Dad and Mother went down to Assembly in Brisbane and visited G'ma Skerman. While Dad was there G'ma became ill and passed away. It was strange that in latter years she saw less of Dad than any other member of the family but he was with her at the end and had a long talk with her. G'ma told Mother on one occasion that Dad put more into Rockangle than what he got out of it even her son in law got more out of Rockangle than Dad.

While Dad and Mother were away we did some corn thrashing jobs. At Herb Halls Fred narrowly missed a bad accident. He was ramming cobs into the drum and his sleeve was caught in a revolving shaft. Fred Funk saw what happened and pulled off a belt, otherwise Fred would have been badly hurt. No rain fell that winter, consequently no crops were planted.

In September Dad put a headstone on G'pa's grave. The Aunts had the headstone made and Dad did the cementing. Lyn left home in September for Nundah then began nursing in the Brisbane General Hospital. The day Lyn left all of us were smitten down with the Flu. A few of us had to crawl around and do the necessary work.

Christmas was quiet that year. Con went to Tenterfield to be with Mabel and just Mother, Dad, Keith, Fred and I were at home.

1936.

In January Alice came up for a few weeks and Florrie Smith came to Clontarf and was given a party in Funk's barn. The old year went and the new returned in withering weeks of drought which was true for 1936. Dad went to an optometrist who told him if he did not have treatment he would be blind in the near future. Dad had to go to a specialist for some months every week in Toowoomba.

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About the end of January, Mrs. Muir came to see Dad. She had seen in the paper that C. J. Skerman was wanting to lease a farm and she wanted to know if he was a relation. Dad rang Charlie Skerman who came over from Maryvale, inspected Muir's farm and decided to take it. The family arrived with Norman Anderson also son-in-law.

We started sinking a new dam and got it as far as we could with a wheel tractor. Aunt Meg had undergone a big operation and came to us to recuperate with us for four or five weeks. No rain fell and the cattle were without food so we tried felling Balar trees. Uncle Charlie had Muir's cattle taken away on agistment. In June, light rains fell and we planted over 200 acres of wheat and the cows began to die like flies. We lost heavily in the remaining months of winter. We only milked a few cows once per day and were kept in milk and butter. We had no income. Things were grim. As soon as some wheat was big enough we put some of the younger cows on to it to save their lives. One we lifted every day for a fortnight and when we got her to her feet the brute tried to charge us. A Salvation Army Officer called on us for the self denial appeal and when Mother told him we had no money in the house he offered to take Dad's cheque down to him. He did not know that our only income at that time was cow hides.

The dam went dry in March and I carted water a few loads every day till rain fell. Old Chess was not fast. Time dragged that year. Charlie Skerman's with no milking made a rough tennis court and played. We went a few times.

Mr. E. M. Johnstone was transferred and Mr. Ken Innes was appointed in August. He was a fresh breezy person and he seemed to put new life into us. The wheat was big enough to graze and we started sending cream once more. A butter factory was started early in the year and was completed and opened in October.

Uncle Charlie got the cattle back and after a few weeks a vicious cow known as "Old Horse" kicked him and broke his leg. The boys put him in the car and brought him to Mother. She would not let them take him any further and sent for the Doctor in Millmerran and he set the leg. Uncle was a patient for about four weeks with us.

Lyn came home for her first holidays and Mabel came from Tenterfield. The last Sunday we took Ken Innes to services at Koorangarra and Lavelle. At Koorangarra the last hymn was from Alexander book: "Where Will You Spend Eternity?" The organist could not be heard distinctly and everyone started on a different key. The result was some of the congregation got the giggles.

One Guild evening about this time Ken Innes had the people singing "Yes We Have No Dam Water". Lyn's holidays soon went and she went back to Brisbane rather home sick. Rain fell almost to the hour of the abdication of King Edward VIII and the ascension of George VI. Con sat for the Scholarship Exam. Miss Gomme the teacher pushed her on but other teachers would have kept her another year. After the exam she went down to Hardings and went with them to Redcliffe. Lyn went down to spend Christmas with the Hardings but as she went a passenger took Lyn's port by mistake. In

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her port were presents for the Hardings and Con. That incident spoiled their Christmas. Some months later she got it back but with some things missing.

Just a few weeks before Christmas a heavy storm put almost 8ft of water in the dam and the following night another storm made the dam almost break its banks. For a few weeks we had to nosebag the cows as the heavy rain washed away the straw the cattle were eating but the grass grew quickly and in a few weeks there was grass in abundance. 1936 was a bad year. We had lost more than half of our herd, fed off 200 acres of wheat and only got back enough grain to plant next season.

1937.

Ken Innes had heard that I was interested in the Ministry and he put some study books in front of me and almost dared me to do it so I started going to Gladys Done to help me with English. Con returned to school. About March that year happenings at Millmerran again hit the headlines. A woman was working at the hotel living away from her husband and he arrived one day in a car and she was scared of him. She saw her husband in the street and she begged a commercial traveller to protect her. The husband was carrying a firearm of some sort, shot at her hitting her and the bullet plowed a furrow across the stomach of the commercial traveller. The man rushed away in his car and shot himself. The police put everyone in the street into shelter and Ken Innes was rounded up into the hotel. The injured people, man and woman, were taken to Toowoomba hospital. Next day Ken met Barny Ott and he had a cap gun in his hand. He asked Barny where could he get a licence for his revolver and Barny said "the police station". Ken then fired the cap gun and Barny fell flat with fright.

In March we had a fall of over two inches of rain and we tried to take the cream in by car and it was an awful trip leaving at 9 am. getting to Millmerran about 2.30 p.m. and we could not get the car over Knight's hill on the return journey. Lyn came home for Easter arriving on a railmotor about 1 a.m. Alice was to come with her but they both went to different platforms and Alice went home when she did not meet Lyn. She arrived on the Saturday afternoon.

On Easter Sunday I was to meet Ken Innes on the mail car at Levelle as he went to a P.F.A. Camp at Murphys Creek but he missed his connection and stayed at camp. I had to take the services at Kooroongarra, 11 am., Lavelle 2.30 p.m. and Millmerran at 7.30 p.m.

In June I enrolled on a correspondence course for three subjects of the Junior University Examination and put in an application to the Home Mission Committee and had to interview Rev. A. Martin and D. S. Jones in Toowoomba.

In June we bought a wireless and it made a difference to life and we could keep a curb on Mother's time clock as she had a habit of putting it on a few minutes per day and calling out each morning: "Get up boys it's getting late." We heard a devotional session

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at breakfast time, 9.a.m. after milking and news. We heard the serials: "As Ye Sow" and "Dad and Dave".

About July, Mabel was asked to take over Torquay Hospital in Tenterfield but Vera did not wish to continue. Dad went down to help Mabel move to the bigger hospital. While he was away good rain fell and Fred, Keith and I put in the wheat crop. When Dad came home Keith went down with an urgent call for Mother. Keith went to Brisbane for a short trip before he came home then when he got back I had to go to Brisbane to interview the Home Mission Committee. Ken Innes came with me. That night when I got home heavy rain set in and the dam was overflowing through the paddocks of ripening wheat. The rain was a catastrophe to the crop as rust set in. We were expecting about 1,200 bags but we harvested about 900 bags.

Through the year Con left school and started going to Miss Dooley in Millmerran for music lessons and she progressed quickly. Early December Lyn and Thelma Petrie came home on holidays from the Brisbane General and we all went to a concert given by Miss Dooley's pupils. A lovely Christmas was spent and on Boxing Day a party climbed Mt. Domeville. A few days after Christmas Lyn had to return to the hospital and Mother went to spend a holiday at Burleigh Heads with the Hardings.

1938.

This year brought change to the family. Arrangements were made for me to go to Tenterfield and stay with Mabel and do voluntary work with the Presbyterian Minister there. At the end of January I left home and was studying for the Entrance Examination for the Home Mission Course. In April I sat for the exam and passed. In the meantime I was working with Rev. C. G. Mathieson M.A. and took my first service in Tenterfield. Mother came down to assist Mabel and was not over well. Then Dr. Watt told her she had Rheumatoid Arthritis. She went home with a bad back and almost a cripple.

In May I supplied the Tenterfield pulpit for a fortnight and started on study for 1st Year Home Mission Course, Mr. Mathieson giving me a start in Greek. With the money I earned for supply, I bought an overcoat and a suit. In October I sat for the Home Mission Exam and passed in all but logic. At the end of October I went home just in time to help them move.

The Glen Millmerran was sold but rather disastrously. Dad got the worst end of a deal with a swindler and a crooked lawyer and we were swindled out of the Millmerran property. Things were grim. The tractor had broken down, Mother was very sick the phone had been put on to the place and in only a short time the line was struck with lightning and a freak storm hit the property and 150 acres of wheat was stripped with hail.

In October I was notified that I was appointed to Westbrook Pittsworth Charge and was to take up duties from the beginning of November.

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I arrived home one night and we moved to Drayton next day. Out of the bad deal there was a farmlet at Drayton of about 120 acres with a mortgage. With it were 10 cows. Things were grim. Dad was left so broke that he could not raise enough money to fight the case through court. Several avenues were explored but it was hopeless. Then there was a crop of canary seed at Drayton but a fire got away from a neighbour and it was burnt. The house at Drayton was small but comfortable. Mother had a sick turn within a few days of our arrival and one of the Divine boys who lived opposite said to Fred :”The last lady in that house died, I hope your Mother does not die”. With the property there was a black curly haired dog who refused to go away with the previous owners. His name was “Tiger” and he was a faithful nice old animal.

While at Westbrook-Pittsworth charge when I was working Westbrook I could stay at home and could assist them. Mabel came home for Christmas and Aunt Dora and Meg came up. Keith went to work for Speeds at Oakey and he felt that Mrs. Speed watched every mouthful he ate. Uncle Wal and Aunt Nell paid us a visit on Boxing Day.

1939.

The year financially was a hard one for the homefolk. Keith went to Tenterfield to do odd jobs for Mabel and to study for the entrance exam to the Police Force. During April I was transferred from Westbrook-Pittsworth to Gin Gin, Mt. Perry, thus leaving Dad, Mother, Fred and Con at Drayton and Fred used to help Dick Divine a fair bit.

A friendship sprang up between Les McKay and Lyn and he paid a visit to Drayton. War broke out in September and Keith and Mabel enlisted but Keith was granted leave to go and assist with the wheat harvest at Dalby. Norm had a few fingers taken off in a header and Keith stayed till all the crop was off.

Lyn finished her training in the Brisbane General Hospital and went down to Mabel to help her wind up the business. Mabel had obtained the position as Matron at Scot's College, Warwick. I arrived home on Boxing Day for a fortnight's holiday and Bert Horitz, Doreen and baby Noel with Aunt Jess arrived the last night of the old year.

1940.

In the first few days of the New Year, the Horitzs and Aunt Jess went on to Tenterfield taking Fred and I with them. I stayed the weekend and helped Mabel do some packing. A few weeks later she had an auction sale of furniture etc. and came to Drayton. The day after the sale she was notified of a pending call up in the army. She had to notify Scott's College and it was arranged that Lyn should go in her place until they could appoint another Matron. Then Mabel had a tonsil operation and was home for a while.

Keith went into camp at Redbank about the end of February then after ten days he was sent home on final leave. I came home immediately and Lyn got off for the weekend. The whole family were together for a few days. It was not a pleasant time as a

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cloud of uncertainty and dread was very evident. As Keith was the first volunteer to leave Drayton he was given a send off. It was a wet night and not many were there. Next a.m. Mother, Mabel and Fred saw Keith and I off and I went with him to Ipswich and stayed with him till he had to go back to camp. Next weekend he managed to get home again.

Drayton had great Centenary Celebrations and Con ran a race and won a prize. Then there was a grasshopper plague which caused havoc. The grasshoppers ate all the grass leaves off the trees leaving the country very bare. The trains had to have two engines to get through the slimy hoppers on the line. All cars had to have gauze over their radiators.

Soon after Keith left, Mabel went to Sydney to a Nurses' Club to await her call up and was in Sydney when the "Queen Mary" was in the harbour. She and Keith saw each other a few times. Then soldiers went aboard "Queen Mary" and we knew Keith went aboard. Those were dark days. Germany over ran Holland, Belgium and France. Then there was "Dunkirk" and the fall of France. A Day of Prayer was held when people flocked to Church.

Uncle Walter Skerman at Dalby died suddenly and Mother and Fred went out. In June, Mabel was called up and was among the first Nursing Sisters to appear in uniform in Sydney.

Lyn came home from Warwick and went out to Dalby and Moola for a visit then she went to Mother's Hospital, Toowoomba to do her Obstetric training. Mabel was encamped at Greta near Newcastle. In September she was expecting to come home on leave but on the day before she was to come Mother received a telegram: "All leave cancelled will write often". Mabel had to go aboard a Dutch ship which had brought prisoners of war and was used as a troop ship going to the Middle East. "John de Witt" was the name. Mabel was in charge of the nursing staff.

Miss Rita Coggan a friend of St' White who had befriended Mabel also took Mabel to the wharf and saw her off then wrote to Mother. Before the boat was out of the Sydney harbour it was boarded and a number of the crew arrested. Then the "John de Witt" joined a convoy and went to India, Suez and Middle East.

After Keith's departure we did not hear from him for about six weeks, then we heard a wireless broadcast that famous well know liner had arrived in Southern England with Australian troops aboard. Later we received letters from him telling of a trip to London and Scotland. He was encamped at Salisbury and Colchester. Before the end of the year the 6th Division was sent to the Middle East via Cape of Good Hope. Letters and parcels began to arrive from Mabel and Keith.

Dad, Mother, Fred and Con struggled on at Drayton. First there was a grasshopper plague then a drought. I came home in November and went out to Millmerran for a weekend to take services. Dad went to Dalby to help with the harvest

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and while lifting bags and other too heavy work he sustained a rupture and came home practically a cripple.

Lyn and Les McKay announced their engagement in December. At Gin Gin Cecil Skerman came to relieve in the Bank of N.S.W. He and I spent Christmas together at Bargara outside Bundaberg but Cec was awaiting a call up in the R.A.A.F.

1941.

Con joined the V.A.D. Detachment in Toowoomba and was in uniform when the American Fleet visited Australia and some of the sailors appeared in Toowoomba. I received a very amusing letter from Con telling of a Greek Relief Ball at Drayton which she attended. The war news was exciting as the Italian Army was on the run in North Africa, Bardia, Tubruk, Bengali. Then the German Army attacked Greece and made a drive through North Africa.

At the end of March I came home as I had received a transfer to Babinda. Alice came to Drayton for the weekend and on the Monday when I was enroute back to Gin Gin, just before I left for the train we heard over the news session that the A.I.F. were in action in Greece and we knew both Mabel and Keith were there. Dad and Mother described this period as the worst moments of their lives. Each day the news became worse. Mother used to have bad dreams and wake up fighting. If she went to Church and anyone spoke to her she could not answer them without losing her composure. She was frantic with worry then one night she had a dream. In it she saw a white cloud and a voice said: "Come unto me all ye who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest". After that she gave up worrying and became calmer. Then in a few days she received a cable "Am safe, writing, Love Skerman". So she knew one was safe. Then in a few days another cable came "Keith and I together on leave, writing. Skerman". That was the cable that brought relief. Soon letters came through and we heard of their adventures in Greece. Mabel's letter was sent into the "Courier Mail" by Aunt Meg and it was printed. Then we heard their voices over a radio broadcast to relatives in Australia.

I arrived in Babinda about the 16th April and my war letters were shared with some of the Church folk up there.

The Drayton property was sold (miraculously) in June, right when the mortgagee was threatening to foreclose and it was Mabel and Keith's allotment money which helped to save the situation. A poultry farm was bought in Smith's Lane Harlaxton. (No. 18). Con went to nurse at a private hospital for a while then took a job at the Toowoomba Foundry as a munition worker making primers for shells. Lyn had a position as a Sister at Wilga but she enlisted in the army but was rejected for overseas on account of a bunion on her foot. Dad, Mother and Fred carried on the poultry farm. In December Japan entered the war with the attack on Pearl Harbour. Lyn and Les were making plans to be married but Lyn received a call up.

On Christmas Eve I arrived home from Babinda and Alice came up from Brisbane

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with me. Les was in Toowoomba for Christmas also. An amusing incident happened during that time. Con was on night shift midnight to 8 a.m. and was trying to sleep when a pedlar with brooms and tin gadgets arrived at the back door accompanied with a very loud voice. Mother heard him approaching and was busily engaged in cleaning the wood stove. She arrived at the back door shaking the poker and saying: "sst, sst". The man was taken back by surprise and said: "Good gracious lady". Mother started to laugh and explained that a shift worker was in the house trying to get a sleep.

1942.

Grave news came through with the fall of Hong Kong and war in Malaya. I enlisted in Toowoomba but had to return to Cairns to report there. I returned North and then had to report in Cairns and came down with a draft early in February. I was one of the first to undergo medical inspection and be rejected much to my disappointment. I went out to the Aunts at West End and found Lyn there in uniform. She had been appointed to the 117th A.G.H. which took over Glennie College Toowoomba and later Downlands. Next day I went up to Toowoomba. Heavy rain set in. On Monday as I returned creeks were in flood. The train was held up south of Rockhampton from about 10 a.m. till 6 p.m. Soon after my return to Babinda I was asked by the Innisfail Session to take over both Innisfail and Babinda as their minister Rev. S. Dodds had enlisted in the army as a private. My duties with both places started on 1st March and I had the use of practically a new Prefect Ford car.

Mabel and Keith both arrived back in Australia about April and were both in Toowoomba in May. Because of the terrible financial position of the home folk and much of Mabel and Keith's allotment money went into the place, the property was made over to Mabel and Keith and Mabel and Keith took over the mortgage on the property. Dad and Mother went on the pension. Poor old Dad was heavily in debt and gradually he began to repay them. For a while he refused to take Communion at Church, he felt dishonest. The repayments were slow but in the end they were all paid.

Con had a few narrow escapes from accidents with the traffic with her bike going to shift work at the foundry so she joined the W.A.A.F.s as a sickroom attendant. She went to Brisbane first then to Bankstown Sydney. Mother thought she would be safer in the services than at the foundry but she knew little. When Con came home on leave and told her some of her experiences her hair nearly stood on end in horror.

Alice and I announced our engagement in December. That year I could not study owing to the pressure of work and was cautioned by the College Committee in Sydney to which I wrathfully replied. As a result I was transferred from Innisfail to Murphy's Creek.

1943.

Early in January I arrived home and there was excitement in the family as Les and Lyn were to be married at St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church on 23rd January. Keith and

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Mabel obtained leave but Con's application was refused. I had not seen Mabel and Keith since their return from overseas. Before the wedding I went to Murphy's Creek to learn to ride the motor bike under Les' tuition.

Lyn was granted a few days' leave to be married and a few days' honeymoon. Hector Dunn officiated at the wedding owing to Rev. M. Joughin's absence. Ian Whyte and I were bestman and Groomsman and Nancy Love and Molly Fittall bridesmaids. Mabel was to be Bridesmaid but her leave was uncertain. Alice was able to attend the wedding but could not wait for the reception. The wedding breakfast was held at Hotel Canberra, Toowoomba but we had to provide all the poultry and waitresses.

Mabel was posted to 117th A.G.H. on compassionate leave and after a few months was sent to take charge of the Camp Hospital at Canungra, the Jungle Training School. In the early months of 1943 train loads of the wounded and malaria cases from New Guinea began to arrive in Toowoomba.

Most of the time I was at Murphy's Creek and Toowoomba I was sick with Asthma. Also had an accident with the motor bike and finally I went down with Flu. At the end of September I returned to Mt. Perry and Gin Gin. Mother developed the Flu. Con came home on leave and asked for extended leave in order to nurse Mother. Later she applied for release from the W.A.A.F's and came home. Dr. Hume who attended Mother then engaged Con as a surgery nurse. Keith was stationed in Queensland and Lyn was released from the arm.

In November I passed Third Year Home Missionary Exams all but Ethics. Les completed his Theological Course and accepted a call to Roma.

1944.

Lyn and Les were home for a while and Con went with them to help them settle in. Les was inducted in February. I was at Mt. Perry, Gin Gin till the end of February and sat for a Post in Ethics, then was appointed to Tambourine Mountains and to start at the Theological Hall in March. On 4th April Douglas Bruce and Dorothy McKay were born in the Roma Maternity Hospital and an excited Grandmother rushed out to see her first Grandchildren. Dad had a hernia operation at Wilga during June. Con had to have her tonsils removed in September. Lyn and twins visited Toowoomba. I went up to see them and Con returned to Tambourine with me. I managed to secure a house for 22/6 per week. Mabel and Vera Roden came up from Canungra at the weekend and we had quite a house party.

The second wedding in the family took place on 18th October in the City Congregational Church, Brisbane (the old Wickham Terrace Presbyterian Church) resumed by the railway. Alice and I were married by Rev. P. Watson and Dr. I Morris assisting. Con was Bridesmaid and Ken Innes Bestman. The reception was held at the Red Cross Cafe and only members of the Harding-Skerman families were present. Some were not able to get leave. Mother and Con came down from Toowoomba by service car

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and Mabel and Keith had leave. Dad was in Brisbane having spent a few days with me at Tambourine. Fred and Lyn could not attend.

1945.

Les and Lyn and the twins were at Harlaxton for holidays. Alice and I went up for a few days. When we came back we brought Mother with us and she spent a few weeks at Tambourine. One day she went down with the Butcher to Canungra and spent the day with Mabel. Con had been corresponding with Chaplain C. C. Mathieson for some time. He came to the Brisbane area and she went down to see him and they became engaged about March. It was a short engagement. They were married on 18th May at St. Stephen's Toowoomba by Les McKay and I assisting. Mabel was Bridesmaid and Rev. W. Reynolds, Bestman (Windsor Brisbane). They caught the 3 p.m. train to Brisbane, enroute to Currumbin for the Honeymoon. Alice, Aunt Dora and I were on the same train. All but Keith were at the wedding. He was in Borneo.

Just prior to Con's wedding the war in Europe came to an end. V.E. day was observed with a good deal of pensiveness as the war was not finished for us. Mabel was at Canungra and Camp Cable. On a few occasions when Alice and I arrived from Eagle Heights we found the house taken over by the military. They brought their food with them.

In August I was smitten down with an attack of Renal Colic and had to go to Beaudesert Hospital by Ambulance. When I got back news came through that an atomic bomb had been dropped on Horishema, Japan. Finally war came to an end on 15th August. Keith arrived back from Borneo in September and was discharged from the Army. He asked for a Medical Board because of an injury he received to his back when he fell down the hold of the boat going to Greece. It was then discovered that he had sustained a cracked spine, thus accounting for the trouble. He obtained a position with the Gas Works in Toowoomba but heavy work aggravated his injury. Cyril was discharged from the Army and received a call to Trundle. Con left Toowoomba in October. Mabel was discharged from the Army about November or December.

1946.

In January, Mabel and family had a house at Redcliffe. Lyn, Les and family came down. Alice and I spent a few days with them. Change was the order of that year. Cyril and Con went to live at Trundle. I was transferred to Virginia and took up residence at 7 Bucle Street, Northgate at the end of February. This was my final year at the Theological Hall. Dad came and stayed a few days. Fred left home and went to Woombye to work for Perce Pringle. Keith decided to give up work and under the Repatriation Scheme enrolled as a scholar at the Toowoomba High School to study for the Junior University Exam. He had to do two years in one but was assisted very much by the staff. Mabel underwent treatment for Rheumatoid Arthritis. John Gordon Mathieson was born at Trundle on 2nd April. Then on 2nd August, Raymond Benjamin Skerman was born at Fermoy Hospital, Auchenflower, Brisbane. Mabel came down to housekeep for a few

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weeks and also underwent a refresher course in the Brisbane General Hospital. She was offered and accepted the position of Matron of the P.A.M. Tenterfield, (Prince Alfred Memorial).

I was successful in passing my final exam and was licensed in Ann Street, Presbyterian Church on the 8th December. Mother came down for the occasion. Before the end of the year I received a call to the Townsville Suburban Charge.

1947.

The married members of the family assembled in Toowoomba in January. Con with baby John, Les and Lyn and the twins and Alice, Ben and I arrived to say farewell before we left for Townsville. Les, Lyn, Alice and I went to the "Haven" Redcliffe for a few days. While enroute Alice fell down the steps in the subway at Roma Street station with Ben in her arms. She sustained a badly bruised knee but Ben was unhurt. I left by the Sunshine mail train on the Sunday night and Alice was to come by plane on Tuesday a.m. However heavy rain set in. I arrived in Townsville and before mid day all rail communication North and South was cut by flood water. The airport was closed. Alice had to spend a bad night in Rockhampton and finally arrived the next day about 2 p.m. The induction took place the night before despite the rain and floods.

Things went on at home. Fred obtained a job in the Toowoomba City Council at Laurel Bank Park. Keith attended the Toowoomba Tech. College and at the end of the year successfully passed the Junior University Exam.

1948.

Lyn arrived in Townsville early in the a.m. New Year's Day about 8 a.m. Joy Marguerite Skerman was born at Park Haven Hospital, Hermit Park, Townsville. Les arrived a few days later and he baptised Joy in the Hyde Park Church. She was the fifth grandchild and second grand-daughter. A general state wide railway strike took place in February. Our holidays were due so we flew by plane from Townsville to Brisbane. Keith obtained a position with the Social Services in Brisbane and stayed with the Aunts at West End Brisbane. Mabel came on holidays to Townsville per plane for holidays in September.

1949.

This year saw a stirring of movements to the family. Keith left Brisbane and obtained a position with the P.M.G. Toowoomba. Con and Cyril left Trundle for Guyra. Mabel left the P.A.M. Tenterfield and took the Matronship of Fairholme, Toowoomba. Lyn and family came to Toowoomba in May and Judith Marilyn was born at Rushton on 16th June.

Alice, Ben, Joy and I came to Assembly for the Centenary Celebrations of Presbyterian Church of Queensland and stayed a few days in Toowoomba. Keith had

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bought an old Chev car. The family had been without a car since 1942.

On our return to Townsville we had to pack up and leave. I accepted a call to St. James, Bowen and was inducted there on the 8th June.

Towards the end of June, Dad made the journey to Bowen without a sleeper. It was a tiring journey for him. He stayed until about the end of August and took his only flight by plane on his return journey. He was agitated before he left but it was a plane air freighting tomatoes to Brisbane and Sydney and was non stop to Brisbane. He thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Towards the end of the year Mabel went to Dirribandi as matron of the hospital.

1950.

Early in the year Mother was staying with the Aunts at Grange, Brisbane. They had left West End the year before. While she was there Alice, Joy, Ben and I arrived in Brisbane by plane. I was getting repeated attacks of Renal Colic and was sent to Brisbane for an operation which took place on 2nd February and for 5 weeks I was a patient in Ward 7 Brisbane General Hospital.

Aunt Amy Pringle had died and Dad came down for the funeral. The day after the operation he came to the hospital to see me. I was under sedation and could not open my eyes though not asleep and could not talk much. My condition upset Dad. After I left hospital I spent two weekends in Toowoomba. That year was a very wet one. It seemed to rain continually for months. Bad floods were experienced in Kempsey and Maitland.

In April, Keith sold his Chev car and bought a new Prefect. Mrs. Cramb and Aunt Meg were in Toowoomba at the time. Alice, the family and I returned to Bowen at the end of March. On 16th September, Robyn Alison Skerman was born in the Maternity Hospital, Bowen.

At the end of the year Les McKay accepted an appointment to the Burke and Wills Patrol in the Australian Inland Mission. Keith and the home folk managed to secure a house near them in Lemnos Street so when Les and Lyn came from Roma they moved into their home.

1951.

Les and Lyn and family moved into Lemnos Street and the twins started at Harlaxton School. It was their second year as they started in Roma the previous year. Cyril was not well so the family came to Toowoomba while he underwent treatment. John also went to Harlaxton School. Alice, I and the children came down in May. I attended Assembly then spent a few days in Toowoomba. Dad celebrated his 80th birthday, firstly with a party at Sandgate, then another with the family at Harlaxton. Robyn was baptised at the party. She shared G'pa's celebration. Cyril obliged us by

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performing the ceremony. Shortly after, Mabel went to Gladstone. Cyril and Con returned to Guyra and Dad went to stay with them for a while.

1952.

Early in the year the Harlaxton property was sold and a house at 8 Somme Street was purchased and the family moved in. Aunt Dora helped them move. This was the most comfortable home Dad and Mother had as it had a brick fire place and was sewerred. This was their last home. The death of King George VI took place in February and Queen Elizabeth II began her reign.

Mother went in May to be with Con. She came home and Lyn stayed down. David Keith Mathieson was born on the 5th June. Keith in the meantime sold the Prefect and bought a Hillman car. He had quite an experience crossing Missing's Flat enroute to Guyra with Lyn.

Mabel underwent the Child Welfare Training Course and went too and from Brisbane. Alice, Family and I came down between Christmas and New Year. We were delayed on our homeward trip by floods.

1953.

Mabel finisher her Child Welfare Training and took over the matronship of St. Stephen's Hospital, Maryborough. Ben developed Asthma badly and had to undergo I.A.C.T.H. injections to save his life. Three injections for a day for a week, two per day for a fortnight and one per day for a week.

The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth took place in June. During the Celebrations in Toowoomba Lyn was down the street and she saw a girl driving Keith's car. The family began to take notice and they soon met Miss Nancy Gaydon. She went to Lyn's place for tea and later to Somme Street.

It was a bad year in the Bowen Manse. Firstly Ben was very sick with Asthma and then the three children developed whooping cough. Joy broke her right arm above the elbow and was in Bowen Hospital for a fortnight and Townsville three weeks. Alice went to Townsville with her and while she was away Ben developed Measles. She left Joy to come home. I had to go to Brisbane for quarterly meetings and while I was away the Townsville Hospital rang to say that Joy could come home. Alice rang Deaths to borrow clothes and Mrs. Flo Pott was returning from Townsville and brought Joy home. Mabel left Maryborough and worked with the Child Welfare in Toowoomba centre.

1954.

The visit of Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh was the big event in the early months. Con, Cyril and family came to Toowoomba to see the Queen. Keith and Nance's engagement was announced and Keith bought the house next door to Gaydons,

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15B Pottinger Street, Newtown. I attended Assembly and spent a few days in Toowoomba.

Towards the end of the year great preparations were being made for Keith and Nance's wedding. Alice, family and I came down a few days before the event which was 4th December. Con, John and David came from Guyra, also Aunt Meg and Dora. The wedding was in St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church. I officiated and Les took part in the ceremony. While we were waiting there was another wedding. Rev. R. McIntyre of Oakey officiated. Half way through the ceremony they sang a hymn. "Tell me the old old story, this world's empty glory is costing me too dear", seemed very appropriate". The Phillamonic Choir turned up in full and sang 23rd Psalm and the Benediction.

Nance was attended by a Matron of Honour, Mrs. Luck and a friend Lorraine....and Flower Girls, Dorothy and Judy McKay. Keith's Best Man was Ross Bulgin and Perce Gaydon. The reception was held at Queen's Park Kiosk. Keith and Nance set off to Sydney and stayed the first night in Tenterfield. They returned a few days before Christmas. Mother was thrilled that they called on her before they went to their own home.

After the wedding Alice, family and I went to Brisbane returning to Toowoomba for Christmas. Before we left we heard that Greenmount charge was vacant and I had a talk with Mr Sandilands and went out to look at the Manse. On Boxing Day I took a combined service in Greenmount Church. The little church was packed, Gaydons, McKays and Skermans came out. Perce sang "Bless this House". It seemed to us that the Downs climate might suit Ben. He had coughed with Asthma all the way down in the train, then in a few days lost the cough in Toowoomba. When the call to Greenmount was offered to me I accepted.

1955.

We left Bowen at the end of February to come to Greenmount. I had a return of the Renal Colic, eight turns in a fortnight. The Induction into the Greenmount Charge took place on 4th March. Again the McKays and the Skermans came out. Mabel was Matron at Tara and became unwell and had to have her Gall Bladder removed which took place at St. Vincent's Hospital in June. News reached us also of the death of Aunt Jess Cornwell on 25th May. Nance had her tonsils removed at Wilga. Then trouble set in for us. Ben was smitten down with Pneumonia and was in Clifton Hospital. Joy had to have her tonsils removed and while the two were in Clifton Hospital, Ben's condition worsened and he had to be taken by Ambulance to Brisbane General. Alice and Robyn went down with him and were there six or seven weeks. Ben was in hospital for his 9th birthday and he came home on the 9th September.

Early in May a vacancy occurred at Birdsville A.I.M. Hospital and two nurses were required to relieve so Lyn and Vera Roden offered to go and Lyn had to take the children out with her. Her house was leased and at the end of August she went as far as Charleville and then by plane from there to Birdsville. She was there till January.

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Aunt Nell Skerman passed away in Sandgate and was buried in Dalby on 5th October. I was one of the pall bearers. A few weeks later Roy Skerman died under tragic circumstances. In December Jock Matthews, Nola Skerman's husband was electrocuted using a drill. It was a tragic time for the Dalby Skermans. Three deaths in two months.

On Christmas Day I went in and brought Dad, Mother and Fred out for the day. A combined Service was held at Greenmount at 9 a.m. Keith, Nance and Ross Bulgin came out for tea. Mother and Dad's Golden Wedding was on the 27th December and a picnic party, Skermans, Gaydons, Ross Bulgin and us went to Cunningham's Gap.

1956.

Alice, family and I went to the Gold Coast for a holiday for ten days in January at Broadbeach and arrived back in heavy rain. The next day was the official celebration of Dad and Mother's Golden Wedding. A short service of thanksgiving was held at St. Stephen's where friends and relatives met. I conducted. Jim Sweet and Graham Skerman took part and Rev. F. Forrest gave a short address. Con, Cyril and family and Aunt Dora came up. Also Mabel from Tara.

At the time the original wedding group was in tact. Aunt Ethel, Bridesmaid, Uncle Perce, Bestman, but those two could not attend owing to heavy rain and flooded creeks. Morning tea was held in the kiosk at Queens Park. Cecil Done gave a good speech. The Brisbane folk crossed the Lockyer Creek just in time before flood waters came down. We got to Drayton and found a gully at Finney had cut the road so had to spend the night in Lyn's house. An amusing thing happened. We had been given a nicely decorated Christmas cake and it was used as the top tier of the Golden Wedding cake. We did not like cutting it as it was so nicely done. However on our return from the Golden Wedding Celebrations someone sat on it marring its beauty, so we had no qualms about eating it.

Early in February, Lyn and family returned from Birdsville and their train was held up at Jandarian with a washaway. Mabel left Tara and took over the Community Hospital at Redcliffe. Cyril accepted a call to Moree and went there about June.

The health of the family was much better in 1956. No hospital cases or operations. At the end of November the McKays left for a trip to New Zealand and were away about six weeks. On Christmas Day again I went in for Mother, Dad and Fred who came out for the service and spent the day at Greenmount. I took them back and had to leave at midnight for Charleville for the Induction of Rev. F. McCarthy. Donald Keith Skerman was born on 31st December in Mother's Hospital Toowoomba.

1957.

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The year began the scattering of the family again. Early in the year the Mathiesons and home folk went to Redcliffe for a holiday. We went to Noosaville for a fortnight. Lyn, Les and family returned from New Zealand and all the family were together for the baptism of Donald Keith at Keith and Nance's house. Les accepted a call to Cairns and had only a few weeks to sell the house and go to Cairns.

Mabel left Redcliffe and accepted the Matronship at Goondiwindi Hospital. Dr. Brightman who used to be in Bowen was Medical Superintendent. Problems arose in Greenmount and I returned from the General Assembly at Melbourne. I spent a weekend in Sydney and took the service in Granville/Merrylands charge. A few weeks later I received a call there. We left Greenmount at the end of October, had a fortnight's holiday at Kingscliffe and then went on to Granville. We arrived there on 13th November and I was inducted on the 14th November.

1958.

Mother and Dad's health began to decline and towards the end of the year Mabel resigned from Goondiwindi and went home to look after them. Ben was sick and we got him under Dr. D. Hamilton, Parramatta. Alice had to undergo a big major operation at the end of August and Aunt Dora came down by plane to help me through. In December we all went home per "Pioneer" bus and the McKays came down from Cairns. While we were there Ben became very sick with Asthma and we had to get a doctor several times. It was a relief to get him home and under the specialist once more.

1959.

Soon after our return from holidays I had to go to St. Joseph's Hospital, Auburn with Renal Colic trouble. The tubes were stretched under an anaesthetic and a stone dislodged. In April, Ben was smitten down with appendicitis which had reached the gangrene stage. Then Alice had another operation in North Shore Hospital. Four operations in ten months. Aunt Ethel left Llanarth in winter and went to the Methodist Garden Settlement in Toowoomba. She later became very ill and was moved to Wilga. Mabel was not satisfied with her treatment and attention so had her moved to Somme Street, nursing her and she was critically ill. Fred came down to Sydney for his first visit. Aunt Ethel took up residence at Somme Street.

1960.

A room was built to the front of Somme Street for Aunt Ethel. On 17th March Alan Geoffrey Skerman was born making the third Skerman Grandson, surnamed Skerman and about the 10th grandchild. I baptised him at St. Stephen's one Sunday afternoon when I was up for the weekend. At the end of the year John Mathieson obtained a good Intermediate pass and Dorothy and Doug passed the Junour University Exam in Cairns.

1960.

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Early in January Alice family and I came to Toowoomba by Holden Stationwagon arriving at 9 a.m. Dad's health began to give alarm and some of the relatives came to see him. He took a bad turn on 7th May and passed away on 9th. Con and Cyril arrived just after he died. Lyn and I were not able to get there but Lyn arrived the following day. The funeral left St. Stephen's Church at 3 p.m. Rev. E. G. Miller B.A. officiated, assisted by Graham and Cyril. His body was buried in the Toowoomba Cemetery, just about a week before his 90th birthday. The hymn "O Love that Wilt Not Let Me Go", was sung and Graham quoted a few verses of hymn 589.

"Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,
And flows forever through Heaven's green expansion
The river of Thy peace,
There from the music round me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song
And find at last beneath Thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long.

Mother received a beautiful letter from Hugh Routley which reads as follows:-

"Mr Skerman was a man of great integrity, who was absolutely incapable of a mean action and I rejoice to think that he has now joined his Maker and suffers no more in this sordid world in which we live.

It may be said of him and certainly of you Mrs. Skerman, that you have reaped the harvest of a very successful life in spite of great hardships which meant much self denial. You have raised a splendid family who went into the world fearlessly carrying out God's work. No amount of success in accumulating material success in the world can in any way match the achievement of such magnitude. Please extend to the members of your family, most of them are old childhood friends of mine, my feelings for them at this time. I will make a big effort to get round to see you in the near future. With love to you. I remain, Yours sincerely, Hugh Routley".

In June I went home to see Mother about a month after Dad's death. Towards the end of the year Cyril accepted a call to Lake Macquarie Charge and arrived home on Christmas Day before setting forth to Toronto. Lyn and Les arrived after Christmas with the surprising news that Les had accepted another appointment in the A.I.M. in his old Patrol which was to take effect in February.

1962.

Lyn returned to Cairns and came back to Toowoomba to 37 Alford Street. Doug and Dorothy went to Mt. Lofty High School there to study for the Senior University Examination. Judy went to the East Toowoomba State School for the Scholarship Examination. Cyril was inducted into the Lake Macquarie Charge on 4th January.

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At the end of August we made the trip by car to Toowoomba and saw all the family. On the 29th September Lorraine Gay Skerman was born.

Uncle Arthur had been at the Methodist Home and died suddenly on 8th September. Marj Peterson went up to stay with Mother. Aunt Dora was also there. The Jehovah Witness crowd caused a bit of trouble but his body was cremated in Brisbane. Poor old chap had had a hard life with little happiness and comfort and was a very lonely man.

At the end of the year Joy passed her Intermediate Exam at Rose Hill Junior Girls High School. Then we all went to Culcairn to supply the Charge while Porter Young went to Granville. John Mathieson obtained an excellent pass in the Leaving Examination and Dorothy and Doug passed with high passes in the Senior University Examination.

Three grandchildren enrolled in universities. Dorothy and Doug in the Queensland University, St. Lucia, Brisbane, Doug taking Architecture and Dorothy, Occupational Therapy. John took a Science Course in the Newcastle Branch of the University. Mother was thrilled that her grandchildren were getting the advantages that her own children were denied. In January, Lyn and Les went house hunting and finally purchased one at 25 Moredale Street, Indooroopilly. Judith enrolled at the Indooroopilly High School. Joy attended the Sydney Technical College doing a Secretarial Course. This year was Ben's Leaving Examination year.

Mabel came to Sydney in April to attend a reunion of the 2/5 A.G.H. and marched in the Anzac Day Procession. Aunt Ethel went back to the Methodist Garden Settlement.

Later in the year Joy secured a job in the Australian Presbyterian Board of Missions Office and Ben sat for his Leaving Examination then went working at Palings, City.

1964.

Robyn and I went to Queensland by train via Brisbane. While we were in Toowoomba there was a severe heatwave which Mother felt very much. When there we heard that Ben had passed the Leaving with two honours and secured a Commonwealth Scholarship. He enrolled on an Arts Course in the Sydney University in March.

In August we all went to Toowoomba and Brisbane by train for a holiday. Mother though well, we noticed that she was weaker. Toward the end of the year she was feeling very weary but said she wanted to see her baby one more (meaning Con) who was coming home for a few days after Christmas.

After we returned to Sydney early in September I received a call to the Richmond/Windsor, Kurrajong Heights Charge and was inducted there on 30th October.

LIFE HISTORY OF THE SKERMAN FAMILY

We left Granville on 28th October after being there for almost seven years.

Con, Cyril and boys went home for a few days after Christmas leaving about 31st December and staying a few nights enroute home.

1965.

On 3rd January Joy went to Concord Hospital (Repatriation) and General Hospital to commence her training as a Nurse. On 5th Con rang me to say she had word that Mother had a Coronary Occlusion and was critically ill. I immediately rang the railway and they got me a seat on the Second Division of the Brisbane Mail. Con met me at Broadmeadow and was fortunate enough to get a seat and we travelled together as far as Casino. The train was 3/4 hour late when we arrived in Brisbane but Keith was at the station to meet us.

At 3.45 p.m. we arrived and Mother was quite bright. She had told the doctor on his first visit that she had 83 wonderful years. She was able to talk with Con and I. I kissed her on arrival and said, "Sorry Mum, I have not been able to shave on the train". She said, "So I felt". Mabel rang the doctor in regard to Mother's condition and he said it was necessary for her to go into hospital, preferably St. Vincent's Hospital. Mother was a bit upset at the verdict so was Mabel, Lyn and Con. Mother said cheerfully, "Hope he forgets to call". However he did call and said the only hope was treatment but chances of recovery were slight. An ambulance arrived at 7 p.m. and Mabel went up with her. Later Lyn and Con went up but only one was allowed to stop and Lyn stayed. Mother's concern was for Lyn and wanted her to go home or to try and sleep. Towards midnight she smiled at Lyn and lapsed into unconsciousness. We were called at 1 a.m. but she had passed away in Lyn's arms before we arrived. She looked as if she had just gone to sleep and at rest. All the lines had gone from her face. The six of us were together for her passing.

Next a.m. Keith broke the news to Aunt Ethel and brought her to Somme Street to be with us for the day.

On 8th January (Keith's birthday) her body was laid to rest beside Dad in the Toowoomba Cemetery. The funeral left St. Stephen's Church at 1 p.m. Aunt Dora arrived at 11 a.m. with Les and Dorothea Ekert, Ross her husband and family. Rev. E. G. Miller assisted by Les conducted the service which was beautiful and comforting. The Brisbane relatives and Dalby folk all turned up and came to Somme Street for afternoon tea.

Thus ended the sojourn of our wonderful mother. "We spend our years as a tale that is told". Our parents were never wealthy in worldly goods but they did their best for us and gave us an example of true Christian and Godly lives. "To live in hearts left

LIFE HISTORY OF THE SKERMAN FAMILY

behind is not to die”.

Thank you Dad and Mum, you did not leave us property and wealth which could cause the family to quarrel and divide. You taught us to love God and set an example of righteousness, love and service. Your lives were not easy ones but you fought a good fight and have kept the faith. Your lives expressed the words:-

I wrestled on towards heaven,
Against storm and wind and tide;
Now like a weary traveller
That leaneth on his guide.
Amid the shades of evening,
While sinks life's lingering sand
I hail the glory dawning,
In Emmanuel's land.