

'Voices of Hall District Project'

Interviewee: Wesley (Wes) Kilby

Interviewer: Phil Robson

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Location: 'Lochleigh', Barton Highway, Hall

It's the 14th of March 2014. This is the 3rd interview in the series of Oral History Program, talking to the descendants of the pioneer families of the Hall District. Today I'm speaking with; known widely as 'Wes'; but formally known as Wesley Kilby. Wesley's the son of Keith Kilby, and the grandson of James and Beatrice Kilby.

Now, Wes, what we're trying to establish here is early - well, the early lives of the early settlers and the pioneer families that settled in this district. Do you remember when the Kilby family came to the Hall District? When they would have settled?

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Uh... my Grandfather arrived here in 1905. He didn't settle here first. He was married in 1896 or somewhere around that time. And he had a property at the Falls when he married Beatrice and they lived there for quite some years until 1905 when they were burnt out with a big bushfire that jumped across the river. My Grandfather was already sort of thinking about moving, because children then - uh... my father was born in 1898 so, yeah he was getting to school age. So they were looking to get to school and they were a long, long way away from school there. So he decided they'd move into the village. And he bought this property 'Eneagh Hill, which was just down from the Catholic church. Straight down the hill. He um still had land at Parkwood in those days and he still sort of ran the farm with the help of the children - my father and his brother (and brothers included into that). And after a while he started a butchering business in the village and would buy stock from all around the place. And he had a killing yard at the back there, and he would ride on his horse out ten miles and bring the beast back and kill it. Or buy a sheep from a farmer somewhere, all over the place. No trucks in those days. Drove them all on foot. Pretty... pretty mean feat. For one man on a horse and a couple of dogs to grab one beast from a man's farm and drive it ten ks (kms) home. And so he did that for quite some time. He delivered meat around the village. No refrigeration much in those days so it had to be delivered fresh. Or he would corn it or salt it like they did in the old days to keep it. And he had a pise butchering shop there that I remember as a kid, and that's where he did most of his stuff.

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Did he ever talk about his father? Or parents? Robert wasn't it? Robert Kilby.

Yeah, Robert. I, uh, I learned a lot about Robert only because my wife's been doing the Kilby

history so... Robert was a bit of a... Well William the first one of course that came to Australia then his son Robert. But Robert was a – I wouldn't say a well educated man but he came out with his father when he was younger. He had some schooling. His father couldn't read or write but he could when he started off here. But he was a bit of a jack of all trades like a lot of the Kilbys are I suppose. We're not all intellectuals but we're all fairly useful sort of people. And the more I read about Robert I sort of tend to think I'm a bit like him in some ways. He was a bit of a jack of all trades like me. Did a bit of building. Grandfather was a builder. Did a lot of building too. So they all had to be pretty versatile those boys. They came out here with nothing. They had to make their way. They bought blocks of ground and had to establish homes. But they work with neighbours all the time. And all the farming fates and things. They'd – you know they'd help with chaff cutting and drawing in hay and all those sorts of things. So they had a pretty busy life. So he was quite an interesting character. Robert. My Grandfather I knew fairly well. My Grandmother ----- ... I didn't know Robert. I never met Robert or William. So I only go on what I read about Robert. But he seems to be interesting. My Grandfather he was a bit of a blacksmith like Robert was. They had a bit of a blacksmithing trade. He used to do a lot of that sort of work. And he used to do quite a bit of building and stuff for his sons as they established themselves at Parkwood. Built sheds and all sorts of things. But butchering and that and he was in, as a local in the community he was quite involved with the early things in Hall. With the school as you know. In getting the Hall school up and running. He was one of the instigators in that. Cos when they lived in 'Eneagh Hill' my father had to walk to Ginninderra to school. Which is quite a few ks down the road. And they did that for quite some time until Hall opened. Whatever year that was, now, can't remember.

1911.

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My Grandmother, very gracious lady of course. She was a Southwell. Come from good stock. Very kind and we used to see a lot of her in my early days of schooling because we'd walk past her to go to school every day as Bessie probably would have told you. The ins and outs of that. We'd always have a yarn and something to eat on the way past. Which was ritual we carried on. So yeah we had a lot to do with my Grandmother. I think the girls, the girls probably got on better with their Grandmother than I probably did. I didn't... I liked Grandfather. He used to talk about lots of old things.

How would you describe your Grandfather physically? What did he look like?

He's a fairly big man. Fairly tall. Yeah fairly big in stature. Yeah quite strong I'd say. Course he was a bit old by the time I knew him I suppose. Uh yeah.

And your Grandmother?

Shorter. Fairly plump. Plumpish. But short.

And what are your memories of visiting your Grandparents at 'Eneagh Hill'

Oh as I said we might – when we walked to school, we'd walk about a kilometre down this way and meet up with my cousins Bessie and Runa. Then we'd walk east towards up past 'Eneagh Hill' to go to school and she would always be there to say hello. I can remember in the afternoon we always had a drink and something to eat on the way home. We wouldn't do it in the morning because we didn't have time usually. We were usually running a bit late. But I can remember Christmas was a big thing for us young kids. And every Christmas afternoon we'd all meet at 'Eneagh Hill'. And all the cousins would get together and we'd have a great time and we'd have tea there. Yeah she was a very kind, very loving lady.

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How did they manage at 'Eneagh Hill' It would have been you know, pre-electricity, pre-everything I suppose? Wood stove?

They were already used to that weren't they? So they were brought up rough and tough. When my Grandfather in, in – what did I say? In 19 – 1895. 96 when he built the house at 'The Falls'. He cut a lot of the timber for the place himself and built the place. So they were used to nothing I guess so 'Eneagh Hill' wouldn't have been much different I don't think. Would have been a bit more modern I suppose, than the old 'Falls' house. Not that I've ever – I've never been in the 'Falls' house. There wasn't much of left by the time I got there. I can remember four posts. But I've seen a few pictures of it.

And they brought up all their kids at 'Eneagh Hill'?

Yeah, some of them were born at the 'Falls'. Two or three. And the rest of them up here.

And who were they?

Well there was Keith, Athol, Clyde, Bruce, Bob, Beryl and Grace. You know Grace was a Brown of course. She married into the Browns. And Beryl married a Southwell of course. The rest of the Kilbys... Bruce and Bob and Clyde ran 'Parkwood' as a grazing partnership in the end after taking it over from Grandfather as he got older. And they had all that country down there, and that partnership lasted for many, many years until Clyde decided he wanted out and went to town. And then he sold his portion to Bob and then they had it for a while. And then they sold it out to a developer bloke and they moved away other places. And Clyde lived in town for a while until he passed on. Bruce um.. he sort of retired, and his son James Kilby's the only one living at 'Parkwood' at the moment, on a thirty acre block. Which is the only bit left in Kilby name of the old place down there.

What about your father's reminiscences of his father and his stories, that you heard from him, when he was growing up?

Oh I don't remember lots of those I don't think. I just – I remember him talking about the butchering days and helping with those sorts of things. And Grandfather was involved in lots of things that they were doing. And I can remember in the fifties he was still around. He would come out if we went out rabbiting and those sorts of things. I don't remember any great stories about him actually.

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What about your own father?

He was a very busy man my father. He was always on the go. He had a lots and lots of energy I think. He was small in stature. I think he loved, he loved the land. Like we all do. And he worked very hard at it. I think he was a very kind person. to lots of people, always willing to help anybody. And I think that wasn't unusual I suppose in those days. A lot of people did that. But when I read through his diaries I sort of get the feeling – I said to my wife one day after reading this long couple of years there – I said "I'm knocked up." I said "I've been doing so many things and my father was all over the place". Somebody would ring up. So. He was a very kind natured man, my father. He wasn't a hard parent.

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Did he talk about his days of growing up? I know he was one of the first pupils – well, he started at Ginninderra school and then later at Hall school.

He didn't talk much about Hall. I think he didn't go to school for all that long. He left fairly early when he was - probably only fifteen or something like that. But he had enough schooling to seem to get him by. He could write quite well and he was good at arithmetic. He seemed to have enough talents to get him where he wanted to be. I guess farming in those days was not all about that. It was all about hard work more than anything else. Not quite the same today. Today it's not all about hard work. It's a bit of – a lot of nouse. And you need to be a bit smarter to do this job, and it's done a bit differently. Those fellas just worked their way through these things. They just worked hard. And my father was one of those. He was a very hard worker.

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There must have been some time off for relax – well not relaxation. That's not the right word.

Oh he did. He did. He was always – yeah and as I said when he worked hard... and then if I read through his diaries he'll say, "oh we went to a cricket match here" or "we went to football". I don't think he played football much. My uncle did. And some of his other brothers did. I don't remember my father playing a lot of sport. I don't know that he was that's sports-minded. But he might have played a bit of football in his early days. But they would go to lots of things yeah. So they'd go to things in town. He was very involved with the church thing. And he was very much mixed up with the workings of the church, and church meetings, and farming meetings and all those sorts of things. He would attend all those he'd go to the pictures quite a lot.

This is the Hall pictures?

And others. and others as well. We always went to the Hall pictures. But we would often go other places as well. My father loved shows I think. It was one of his great loves. He loved to go a show. And he would go to the Sydney Show, or he'd go to Yass. He'd go to all the ones around here. Queanbeyan. He was very much mixed up with the Canberra Show - or Hall Show originally. He was a life member of the Canberra Show in the end, like some of his brothers. And he worked very hard for the show. He did just love the show.

Was he a successful sheep breeder? Did he win prizes?

Yes, yes. We won a few merino ewe competitions – the partnership did. There's a few

trophies sitting in the lounge there – big cups and things that we won over the time. We were quite successful at that. I think you'd call them successful farmers in those days.

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Any tragedies affect his life?

He wasn't all that well as a child. He had eczema very badly in his early days. And he was quite ill with that. He always had a disfigured... his little finger from his eczema days had grown around and stayed like that all his life, which was one of things. But otherwise he was pretty fit in the end after his rough start.

Well 'The Falls' would have been a bit of a tragedy. The burning down of 'The Falls' in the bushfire.

Yeah, well my father was pretty young then. He was only... uh, seven. He didn't sort of talk too much about that at the time. Oh he did say about it. Yeah that was a bit of a tragedy. The house didn't get burnt down but my grandfather lost a lot of sheds and things I think, and a lot of grass and stuff. So that's when he decided it was time to go. But he had – he'd already, he'd already had this place on the go I think. Before that happened. So he was able to move in there fairly quick. Then 'The Falls' remained as part of the show. They'd just run it with 'Parkwood' then.

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He went into the military?

Yep, yeah they went to war. Not The war. They didn't actually see much active service. They went to Gallipoli and the lighthouse. And he had to wait. Dad was ready to go but my uncle wasn't quite old enough. He had to wait a while 'cos they wanted to go together. which they did. They weren't over there all that long. And he doesn't talk a lot about war things. Talks a bit about the desert and all sorts of things. The thing that worried him more, and thing that he only ever talked about was one of the hardest things he ever had to do was to shoot his horse when he left. 'cos they couldn't bring them home. And they weren't going to be any good. So after being with his horse for quite some time, they had to shoot them before they left. And he reckoned that was upsetting. I s'pose they all had to do it because only one

came home in the end.

What was the inspiration for he and his brother to go off to war? Patriotism?

I guess so, I guess so. Love of country'd help I s'pose. That's what a lot of young people wanted to do didn't they. I don't think – I don't think they went over there just for the honour and glory of being a soldier. I think they went over there to try and help. Make a difference. A lot of people.

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And when they came back, is that when they settled the partnership?

Yeah well they both sort of ended up getting these soldier settlement blocks there which were for the part of – in those days a lot of the big properties had a lot of land that when these soldiers came back from war they were sort of, some of this land was sort of taken off these fellas and handed to these blokes. Well not handed to them, they had to pay some money for it. And my father had this block where we lived near which was three hundred and sixty-five acres I think. And my uncle got one next door. Um, something similar in acreage I think at that time. So then they formed this partnership then because they were close to one another. And they worked very well together all their lives.

My uncle wasn't all that well and he died in his early sixties. He had heart problems. Bessie's (Bardwell) father. So he was quite sick for the latter years of their partnership. It still carried on and they had another, they had another young chap looking after the farm there for them that time when they moved to town. So it was successful, yeah. very.

And what do you remember as a young fella growing up and doing stuff around the farm with your father.

I think, I think I loved fiddling around the farm. I think I was born to be a farmer. I went to school but I didn't like school. I never loved school that much.

0:16:59.9

We're you at Hall school?

I was at Hall school. I don't think I ever loved my school days that much.

Was that with Richard O'Sullivan?

Oh it wasn't , it wasn't his fault. It was me I think. I just wasn't that keen on school in those days. But we went along. I went to Hall school, then I went to Canberra High School till I got my intermediate certificate. Then I came home to work on the farm. And I'm still here.

Did you walk? You would have walked to Hall school.

I walked to Hall School for primary school. When we went to high school I rode my bike to Hall and caught the bus.

What was Hall School like in those days? Which would have been the late forties? Early fifties?

I suppose I would have been uh..there. I would have been there sort of... I s'pose I didn't go to school till I was about 6 because there was no preschool or kindergarten. That was about '39. Uh. I only had one teacher there. O'Sullivan. He was there all the time. Yeah, he was alright Old Sully. as we called him. I think he taught a lot of people very, very well. He'd been around a bit. He'd been at Weetangera and a few other places. He was a good teacher. Yeah.

Can you remember what the school room looked like? Where you sat?

Yeah sort of. I can – I can remember the school like it is now. You know the desks and all that setup there. Similar to that. Same thing I s'pose. (Referring to the museum school room set up?) Same school any how.

So Sully used to sit in front of the fire place? Under the clock?

Yep. He'd sit there yeah, with his swinging chair and sit around there. He was um... he didn't like any nonsense Old Sully. We'd get the cuts pretty quickly if he didn't like us. He used to have this big old bush that grew out the window there that he'd just open the window and

hack a bit off this thing and get himself a cane. And he'd use that, he'd whack you over the hand with it. He wouldn't hit you anywhere else. But I don't think I was treated too badly by him.

Facilities at the old school were pretty basic weren't they?

Pretty basic yeah. Toilets outside. Nothing much. We had a weather shed up the back I know. Where we used to eat sometimes. But there wasn't much else there no. Nothing.

And you had to go out to the weather shed to have your lunch.

Up the top.

Yeah wander down to the very basic old toilets.

Yeah. You know somebody talked about the toilets. I don't... I can't sort of remember the toilets. But they were outside I guess. I remember where one was. I don't even know... I seem to think we had a water tank there at that time.

Yeah should have been. The tank at the end of the building.

I think there was water laid on but I think you could get a drink there. I always remember this map of Australia, and it was outside in the thing there. And he'd take us out there and make us stand on all these different cities where they were s'posed to be. I don't even know how it got there. I can't even find it now. But it was there at one stage. And I can remember sort of playing around in the playground there. We'd have sports afternoons and those sort of things. And we'd have a sort of sports carnival every now and then. He was a bit of a – a bit of a sports fan. O'Sullivan. He was quite a good tennis player, and he was keen on sports.

Did you have a tennis court then?

No not really. I don't remember any tennis court there. No. We used to play cricket a bit somewhere down there in the trees or anywhere. But running and those sort of things we did a lot of.

0:20:23.8

We read in the book about special days like Empire Day?

Yeah we'd celebrate all those. Yeah he was quite keen on those things. Empire Day we'd have bonfires. We'd have – I think he's quite a bird lover too. We used to have a bit of that. A story on birds and things, he was quite keen on that for a while.

Did you have the radio then in those days?

Nope. No radio not in my day. I can't remember it anyhow. There was no school of the air. Or nothing else came on air. I don't know what Bessie'd said about that. Bessie say there was?

No. No we're just trying to work out – we know that ABC radio started school programs we think. In the late thirties.

Did they?

Whether they sort of got to little schools until the mid-forties.

Well I don't remember anything about a radio. Not in my time.

Was there a piano there? For music?

I don't even remember that.

And Mrs O'Sullivan would come and do sewing classes?

She would do that. She would do that. Once – one afternoon a week. Wednesdays I think she was there to teach the girls.

And what did the boys do while -

What did the boys do? I don't know what we did now. Don't know that he ever taught us... We might go outside and do a bit of nature study or something. And we might look at a few other things. I don't remember doing any crafty things.

There was, or there is, an Honour Board on the wall at Hall School. Must have given you a bit of lift looking at it and seeing your father's name and your uncle's name?

Yep. Good. Yeah.

Were there other kids in the class that had relatives up on the board?

Oh... there might have been a Brown. Morley Brown was killed in the First World War. He's – some of his descendants would've been close to my time. Might have been a bit after me but they would have been there. He would've been the only one I could remember.

There was Clyde Hollingsworth who was also killed.

Yeah, well there was Hollingsworths I think. They would have been there too.

And what mischief did you used to get up to?

Uh... like anything that boys get up to. I wasn't real bad I don't think, as a kid.

You didn't get your name in the Punishment Book?

I don't think I'm in there. I haven't had a look actually. Do you know? Am I in there?

I don't think so.

I don't think I'm in there. I don't think I did anything very bad.

0:20:23.8

But you knew all along that you wanted to be a farmer.

Oh, I liked – I'm a... My wife says I'm a fiddler. I fiddle with all sorts of things. I like tinkering with machinery and I like sheep. I wasn't mad keen on cattle and I wasn't all that mad keen on horses. Although we had to deal with horses in my early days. I'm more interested in machinery, cars, vehicles, tractors and all the other things that go with it. I like tinkering with things. Fixing things. I just love fixing things. Anything's broken, it's always a challenge to me to get it going again. I'm still doing it now. That's what keeps me amused.

You didn't use the services of Jim Rochford's garage very much?

Oh yes. Yeah. We would take our cars down there and get things fixed there. And we would do a lot of things through Jimmy. He was a machinery agent as well. so Massey Harris machinery stuff we would buy through him. Headers, and ploughs and that sort of stuff. So yes we would get our vehicles fixed there if we couldn't fix them ourselves usually.

And did you go to the village much for your shopping?

I guess we did in those days. I don't know how often we'd go down there. In the early days it wasn't that much. I guess I didn't attend the village as much as a lot of the other young fellas around because I wasn't in there. So to get to the village wasn't quite as easy for me. Saturday afternoons I always went to the village, in my early days. and we'd muck around with the other Coulton kids, and the Brown kids. We'd go mucking around up the Hall Creek or doing something. Making explosives or doing something silly. I started making big firecrackers at one stage there 'cos my father had some blasting powder that he used to use for splitting timber. And they used to bore a hole in these logs and they'd fill it up full of this powder, and jam some clay and stuff around it and put a fuse in. It was not a real big explosion but it'd be enough to crack the log so he could split it. So I started making bombs out of that for a while. We had this Kittyhawk that crashed over the creek during the war time once, and there were a lot of bits of aluminium around there. Aluminium tubes. I used to go and get some of that and I'd fill it up full of some of this blasting powder and crimp it all over. And then we'd light it up and make this hell of a racket.

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That's an interesting story. I hadn't heard that before. About the Kittyhawk crashing on the

creek.

Hadn't you? Ah... in the early... I do know the year too but I can't remember it. The latter end of the war. In the latter end of the war we had a lot of Kittyhawks we used in the wartime. But then we were getting rid of the Kittyhawks. We were trying to sell them, I understand, to the Dutch government. And we had, at that time, some lot of Dutch in Canberra. And they had this area as a training ground and they would fly over here, and zoom and muck about all the time. And one day when we were down – I was down in the paddock with my uncle Athol, and we were building a hay shed there. These Kittyhawks were flying around and suddenly this one started this awful racket and we all looked up and wondered what was going on. Anyhow, he whirled and banged into the ground. Just over the Edward creek. A bit to the west of that. On sort of Gooromon Ponds Road heading down the creek. He crashed into the ground but the pilot bailed out and he landed on Wallaroo Road, or near the Wallaroo road, just up from the creek a bit. And he was a Dutchman. But this Kittyhawk, yeah it started a bit of a fire 'cos it was the summertime. But us kids, we'd go down there and collect all these bits and pieces all the time 'cos I never seen any aluminium in my day, when I was a young kid. But there was lots of aluminium down there so I would be making anything out of aluminium in those days. I used to manufacture rings for my cousins. Aluminium rings and carve their initials on them and muck about. That's when I found this aluminium tubing and I thought this would be great stuff. We can make some very good explosives out of this. So one Saturday afternoon I had this bomb all made up. and we took it up the Hall Creek above the showground there and we buried this thing in the sand and we lit it up. It was quite good. But all those sorts of things we got up to. As kids. I was in village – yeah I would be down there weekends, but not much during the week no.

And what was down there? What, you know, if you walked up and down the street -

Nothing. We mucked about. And in later years when we got our licences we all had a vehicle and we'd go mucking about hill-climbing somewhere. We had a property – Bill's property – and it's a big hill over the back there and we'd all see if we could get our vehicles to go up there. I dunno, an Austin A40 ute. Bevis' father had a Desoto I think it was. A Desoto ute. And the Coulton boys had a Fargo ute, or their father did. But we'd get them all there and we'd try them out at the back of this hill there to see if it was any – see which of them were best, see how far it would go. Oh, we played tennis on Saturdays in our younger days there as well. But we'd just muck about.

Were they on the courts next to the Pavilion?

Yep. That was our Saturday afternoon jaunt usually for most of us. Even in our married days

we did that for a long time too. Wasn't lot of other activities besides – oh well we were still mixed up with church things. And we would have concerts at the church and that quite often. and Band of Hope concerts, we'd be involved in that as well. and other church things. But in the village itself, there wasn't a lot besides Colin's (Southwell) picture theatre, which I used to help him with for quite some time. As an Assistant Projectionist there. And that went on for quite a few years until I got married and I gave it away. We would always have a lot of kitchen teas in the village 'cos every young girl from the village that was getting married, they would put on a kitchen tea for her. Jeanie Southwell would be the main organiser of that. And that was a bit of a social occasion, because everybody from round about would come to that. And we'd have a dance in Rochford Hall there, and supper. That was a big thing. We'd have a bonfire night every year. Can't do that now can we. worse luck. Other than that I don't remember a lot of other funny things that happened.

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So you grew up, finished school, started work on the farm, worked here - continuously – and then at what stage did you meet Elizabeth?

Oh well I met her when she came to live, in the huts of course. And she was around all the time and because of the partnership job the shearing shed was over there where they lived. and she was always helping doing jobs round the farm there. Collecting eggs and so we sort of struck a relationship there in the early days. And it grew from there yeah. But then she went to town - she moved to 'Rosewood' then went to town – and it continued until we finally got married, whatever year that was.

And as they say lived happily ever after.

Yep. Been good.

With... is it three? Three children?

Four. All boys. They're all around. Not far away. Rodney still works here in the shed all the time. Mark; he lives in Bungendore. He's got a cabinet making show there. carpentry show. Andrew; he runs the farm now 'cos I don't. I lease the farm to him and lives just up the hill. He doesn't work here full-time. He's a fencing contractor most of the time. But he runs the farm in between. weekends and so forth. Peter works in Bungendore at a furniture place. They're all not far away.

So the continuity will... continue. The Kilby's will still... ?

I hope they will. I hope they will. I hope they will. I hope somebody will still stay here. Somebody will end up with it. one of them. who knows what.

Yeah well I mean, the whole exercise here, this project that we're doing. When you think you started talking about William Kilby - I think he arrived in 1811 – then you have Robert, and then so on down the line. And your son Andrew is now still in the area.

Yeah well he's got two boys and Rodney's got a couple of girls, and Peter's got a boy and Mark's got a boy. So there's still a few Kilby's left to carry on the Kilby name. I'm not sure who will carry on the farming game. I think it might end. I guess farming is probably not quite as an attractive game as it used to be nowadays. And Andrew's boys, I don't think that they're – not really interested in the land. Uh Mark's Harry could be, but I don't suppose he will be. Yeah, might be a bit sad. The farming game might end.

0:32:19.5

And how has the community changed in the last, say fifty years, from when you were very active on the farm and associated with the village?

Yeah it was a very happy place I guess. But I guess a lot of people in Hall were sort of farmers anyhow, a lot of them. So it was a bit of a farming community. Even though they lived in the village they had land close by, a lot of people. There was a lot of others there too but I guess you know we, we all sort of knew each other, in those days. Which we don't now. Well, I don't. 'Cos probably my association with the village is not all that much nowadays. We don't tend to have to go down there. Usually we go down to get our paper and bread and all those things, and groceries, from the shop. And we'd get to the shop, we'd meet somebody and we'd all yack around. And now we don't have any kids at school, we don't meet school people so. So we're a bit quieter now as far as the village goes. And the village – probably different people have come into the village and they've come and gone. So the whole aspect has changed I think. But early days it was a, it was a very close knit community and everybody, like I said, was willing to help one another. There was no – nothing about religious worries or anything else. We just all got on very well. And there – if there was a community thing on or something on like a kitchen tea or something, we'd all get there. everybody'd come. And I guess they do that to some degree but there's a different... different... difference in people I s'pose. We're not all doing... a lot of us, as I said, were

farmers in those days. And it's a bit different today.

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You touched earlier on being the assistant projectionist at the theatre with Colin Southwell. Did you enjoy doing that?

Yeah. I like fiddling with those sort of things. He's a good old fella to get on with. Colin. And I used to rewind films and muck about up there. And there's always two machines up there so we had to change one to the other at the end of every reel. There was always these little dots come up on the thing and we'd have to be ready to flick it over so there wasn't a big gap in the middle. I think we must do that automatically now. I still see the dots on the film when I go to the pictures. I know they're there, if you look. 'Cos I'm used to looking at them and we'd get one as a warning and then there was another one and then we'd have to go. So he'd have to fire his machine up and turn it on and change it over and I'd knock mine off whatever.

Are they still run on the old arc lamps in those days?

They did. Yeah. Yeah Colin had this – I think we ran on DC current those days. The carbon, two carbon arcs close together. During the show you had to keep them sort of fairly close. If they went too far away they'd fizz out. They would go out and you'd have to bang them back together to light them again. So then of course there'd be darkness for all. So we didn't like that to happen. and it didn't happen very often I don't think. So we'd have to keep winding – there's these two knobs there to turn these two things together. Keep the arc at the right thing. Yeah, but in the early days he had a couple of old engines out the back that could generate. At first he had a big- an old engine up the back of the shed there that ran all his show. and it had a DC generator on it. And the lights and everything else ran on DC current. Then in latter years he had um... when the power came on to Hall he ditched the old engine 'cos they had two 40 volt AC/DC lights but then he had to have a DC generator to run the arc still. So he had to have electric --- to drive the generator then, out the side of the hall. Don't know what happened to it. But he still had to have DC current for the arc. Not for the machine.

It's interesting you mention about electricity coming to Hall in the sixties. I understand Jim Rochford, the then President of the Progress Association used to lobby strongly for the village to get any sort of work done.

He did. He was very good, Jim. He, as I said earlier he was sort of mixed up – very good mates with Jim Fraser, member for the ACT. In those days there wasn't a huge range of politicians to go through but he would talk to Jim about something. And he would, if he thought it was a good idea he would do it. And so they did lobby for the power for Hall. And it was a good thing too because if it hadn't been for Hall getting the power, we wouldn't have got it either. but we got it not long after that because we thought once they get it to Hall then they should extend it through these rural areas, which they did. So they came out through here. Didn't go down Wallaroo for a while,..it went up Spring Range. And in this local area we

got it as well. We were just about – my father was just about to put in a lighting plant. And we had the house already wired up ready to go. And they decided there were going to give us some power. Once they got to Hall, the ACT extended it a bit further for us which was good. No Jim was very good. he did a lot more for the village than what people realise I think. In those early days they wouldn't have had half these things. But there wasn't a lot of squarking about it. He just sort of got it done somehow.

Did you feel that they thought that Hall was a poor cousin to Canberra? On the end of the list?

Oh well it wasn't looked on that kindly, like Tharwa and all those other places. All these little villages they weren't sort of part of the big city scope at that time. They were all country areas. There was a lot of people lived in Hall that worked in town. Yeah but it was hard to get things done. And Jim was – he ended up getting the water as well in the end after all that. That was a few years later I think. Government had changed a little bit by then. It was good.

Well alright Wes. Thank you for your time. It's been very interesting. And we may talk again.

OK. 17