

Norman Pegg

Warrill View and Harrisville

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Interviewer: Robyn Buchanan

Interview available on CD

Track 01

My name is Norman Thomas Pegg. I was born in Brisbane in 1909 and came to Harrisville in 1911. My family were farmers, they had a mixed farm.

Did you help with the work on the farm when you were young?

Yes, from when I was 5 years old. My father had a dairy in Brisbane before he came up to Warrill View, and he was there the rest of his life. I carried on from him and then my son carried on from me. The farm was an agricultural farm - lucerne, corn. We milked only a few cows for our household use.

Did you go to school in Warrill View?

No, I went to Harrisville School. There were more teachers there [than at Warrill View], and a better education. There were 120 children at the school when I started there in 1914.

My brother was the first boy to be born in the Hospital in Hall Street - there was a girl before him, but he was the first boy. They have closed the Hospital down now - they have closed everything down in Harrisville. They closed the Hospital, they closed the railway, they closed the bank, now we have nothing. You have to go to the city for everything.

When I was young, there was a big flow of people here. They used to come in in horse and sulkies in those days - no motor cars - that was during the First World War, and then in the 1920s.

The railway was important, for passengers and goods. Then there was a railmotor for a while, before they closed the line.

Harrisville was the centre for the whole district - Muttapilly, Peak Crossing, Milora, Wilson's Plains - it was the centre for the whole lot.

We used to have fortnightly cattle sales - there used to be 1000 head nearly every sale. All the cattle were droved by road then, no motor trucks. They had railway yards here, I myself sent a lot of cattle down to Cannon Hill by rail. That's all finished. It was all different, you wouldn't believe it.

What did most of the farmers do here?

They were mostly dairying. On the Warrill Creek, there were agricultural farms but on all the hills, there was dairying. They used to bring their cream in to Harrisville with their carts and load it on the railway.

My father grew lucerne, oats, pumpkin, potatoes, everything that was marketable. We used horses - it wasn't until the 20s or 30s that tractors started to come in.

When did your family get their first tractor?

I was still going to school. It must have been when the War was on, or in the early 20s - a Mogul [spelling??] tractor.

Can you remember World War I?

Yes, I had just started school. I remember when peace was signed, there was a big march up the street.

Were you boys aware of the war very much?

As far as I know, we were - all the goings on, the Kaiser and all. My older brother Jim was in the war. I was only young then.



Wagons belonging to the farm, loaded with lucerne chaff going out to Cunnamulla by rail. The truck at the end of the line belonged to Mr Pegg's brother.

How many people worked on the farm?

We had seven people working on the farm - and there were 16 of us used to sit down for meals. My mother and sister and a maid [did the cooking]. The family worked the farm and we had a couple of working men too - they lived on the farm and slept in a sort of barracks.

It was the biggest farm around here, about 250 acres. That was a big farm in those days. It was called Warrillbank. The produce was sold mostly at Roma Street in Brisbane. We sent them by horses and wagons.

We had a lot of horses, 16 I think. We mostly used horses - the tractor wasn't doing that much work.

We used to buy the horses out west and my brother used to break them in. They were Clydesdales.

I remember in 1924, my father went to Brisbane to buy a wagon and two horses and my brother drove them back here by road. They were wonderful brewery horses.

Was it busy in the main street with all the wagons?

I have seen a line of produce wagons from the top hotel right down to the bottom, waiting for the railway gates to open.

Is there much farming in Harrisville now?

Mostly dairying.

Track 02

When did you take over the farm?

My father died in 1961, and it was four years before the will was fixed up, so it was about 1965 that my son and I took it over.

We levelled the ground, spent thousands levelling the soil, putting an underground main in for irrigation, silos.

We had underground water, four or five bores with 26,000 gallons an hour. We were the only ones who had bores then.

What did you do for entertainment?

We had dances, picture show every Saturday night. There were picture shows right from the First War - silent pictures then. They were shown in the School of Arts.

There used to be a few larrikins around the place. People used to come in in horse and sulky in those days, and the larrikins would take the horse out and take it around the other yard, put the shaft through the fence and harness the horse again - the horse would one side of the fence and the sulky would be on the other. They used to make their own fun in those days, all clean fun

There used to be men's and women's dressing sheds and a diving tower down at the railway weir. Norco have bought the railway yards now, that's where the weir was.

They used to have swimming carnivals - there was a boat with a gramophone going, it was wonderful in those days. People used to come from all over the state for the swimming carnival, all the swimmers in Queensland used to come. It was held in summer time, I think it was held in the holidays.

Track 03

Were there many sports people who came from Harrisville?

We had Perce Parcell, he played for Queensland and Gary [Parcell] went to England. We had two A-grade football teams playing in the Fassifern Association. There were a lot of good sportsmen around here, in cricket and football. There used to be a lot of tennis too, a lot of tennis courts, but hardly anyone plays tennis today, it is mostly cricket and football now.

Rosevale people used to come in, they would drive 13 or 14 miles in their vehicles, load their stuff at the railway, house their horses in the stables at one of the hotels and go back next morning. Some used to go back [in one day] but most stopped over.

People went to Brisbane by train. On the Exhibition holiday, we used to go to Brisbane, and catch the last train back - the Midnight Horror to Mt Edwards at about 1 o'clock in the morning.

Was the railway station very big?

There was a station master here, a night officer, and a porter, and then about 4-5 gangers. They lived around the area, some at Peak Crossing, some at Harrisville.

There was a condensed milk factory, that was out at Wilson's Plains. I don't remember that myself, I can remember people working there. It must have closed about 1914

The Hospital was up in Hall Street, opposite the school. That was a good hospital. We had a resident doctor here, a matron and a nurse, but they closed that down on us. Most people have to go to Ipswich to do their business. They don't give two hoots about the country.

I was born in 1909, next year I will be 90. There have been a lot of changes. I think we have seen our best days.

A story

In the old days, they used to give you 1/- a head for crows. You'd take them in to the Shire Clerk and they would pong like hell. He'd take them around and put them in the bin. A few wags, especially the young kids, would go and get them again and take them home - bring them back again!



Looking at photos:



"The binder throws out sheaves and you put four sheaves together and put a band around the top. You left it for about a fortnight for the sun to cure it, dry it out, so you could put it in the shed and stack it."





"That is all lucerne hay - they cut it into chaff like that. The lucerne was sold in chaff bags."





"The local people went up to Mt Edwards about Moogerah dam - that was about 1914 they went up there. They had it agreed, but when the war started, they put it on the shelf and forgot about it. It wasn't until about 1960 that they thought about it again. The truck was a cream carters truck - I think it had solid rubber tyres."



An early tractor