

CAMPBELLTOWN CITY COUNCIL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
Our Fruitful Record: A history of Market Gardening in Campbelltown

Oral history with Robert Parletta
recorded by Katrina Spencer on 8th January 2018
at Campbelltown, South Australia

Interview OH1130/5

Participants:

OH: Katrina Spencer

RP: Robert Parletta

OH: This is an interview with Robert Parletta undertaken by Katrina Spencer on the eighth of January 2018 at the Campbelltown Council Chambers. It's part of the Campbelltown City Council Oral History project 'Fruitful Record – A History of Market Gardens in Campbelltown' and Robert your family have had market gardens in Campbelltown, so would you like to start by telling us your full name?

RP: My name is Robert Parletta.

OH: Right and-

RP: I was born in April, 1968.

OH: And you were born here in Australia?

RP: I was born in South Australia, born in Adelaide in Medindie actually.

OH: And your Father, what was his name?

RP: Antonia.

OH: And was he born here?

RP: No, he was not born here.

OH: So where?

RP: He was a post-World War II migrant from the southern part of Italy, a little village outside of the city of Benevento, so the village is a lot of them have come from there ... and he came out in 1952.

OH: And so how old was he when he came out?

RP: Twenty-four.

OH: And was he married at that time?

RP: No, he wasn't.

OH: So he came out as a single man?

RP: He was single, yes.

OH: And did he come out with other family members at all?

RP: Well, he was the first of his family to come out and then as was the custom they called other family members over, but there were some other great uncles and other village people from the village that had come across in the twenties, my Great-Uncle came over in the 1920's and he was only twenty years of age then, so that was after the First World War; he decided to come to Australia, some of his other siblings went to Boston in the United States. And so my Uncle Mark, my Great Uncle Mark, Mark Cheritello lived, had a market on St Bernard's Road and then in the 1960's they bought an orchard in the Adelaide Hills, Montacute where they had cherries, lemons, persimmons, plums; so through family and extended friends there's been a close association with the market gardens of Campbelltown and Rostrevor.

OH: So when your Dad came out here did he stay with his uncles or where was he living?

RP: When my Dad first came out here he actually worked for the Fox's at "Foxfield" and he lived on their premises, so he was like a jack-of-all-trades for them, so he would've tended to their cattle, to their sheep and to their property and then my Mother came out in 1955.

OH: Right, so he knew your Mother prior?

RP: My Mother and Father have both come from the same village, my Mother's name is Lucia. They came from the same village but they weren't related or anything like that because the village was quite a big regional village, not large but there was still a population of probably eight to ten thousand in those early years after the Second World War and then

you had this mass migration, a lot of people came to South Australia and Campbelltown in particular, a lot of them went to Argentina, there's a large ... community in Argentina. She came out in 1955, joined my Father at Foxfield and in 1961 they bought, 1960/1961 they bought a property at Paradise, so in those days they were properties in the area of one hectare to two hectares of land that gave migrants the ability to work the land. And so when I was growing up the nearest neighbour was two hundred and fifty metres or somewhere between a hundred and two hundred and fifty metres away, so there was the Mercorella's across the road, there was the De Corso's next door, the Michel's down the road, the Belperio's down Silks Road; so there weren't that many houses, it wasn't highly, not very dense in terms of housing at that point in time.

OH: And a number of those families came from the same region?

RP: Yes, so the Mercorella's are from a similar village close to my parents village called ... and the Corso's next door were from ... as well and then the Michel's down the road were also from ..., so that whole strip between Gorge Road and the river was all market gardens from that general vicinity and they all knew each other.

OH: And you said when your Mum came out she went to live at Foxfield, so were they married?

RP: My parents got married by proclamation.

OH: Okay, so she knew she was coming out to be with your Father?

RP: Yeah, like an arranged marriage, she was betrothed to be with my Father from across the shore.

OH: Oh, that's lovely. And children, how many children did they have?

RP: I have four siblings, so I'm one of five.

OH: And where do you fit in that?

RP: I'm the second to last.

OH: Second to last.

RP: So my parents had three girls to begin with and then when I was born most of the community didn't believe that my father and my mother had had a boy because they'd had girls beforehand. So it was a lot of long hours working in the garden growing up, it was a case of my parents market garden was not only our home but it was also their place of

business and it was a place where they socialised a lot with other market gardeners and other people from the area. So there are a lot of fond memories, but also some-

OH: Hard.

RP: Hard memories that come to mind as a result.

OH: So you said they were long hours, so both of your parents worked on the market garden?

RP: They both worked together, yes. They were partners in crime so to speak.

OH: So your Father didn't have another job?

RP: Well, initially when they first came out here they did, my Dad used to also work for the wool processing, there were a number of wool processing facilities on the other side of town at Woodville and so my father used to ride his bike from Foxfield and ride his bike to Glynde and catch the tram because there was a tram that used to go down Payneham Road and then changed trams in the city and go to Woodville.

OH: Okay.

RP: So a lot of them went to work for either General Motors or Chrysler. My Father went to work for a wool processing facility – I think, I'm not a hundred per cent sure, but it may've been owned by the Michel family but I'm not a hundred per cent sure about that, I'm only going by memory.

OH: So when you came along were you expected to work on the market garden as a child?

RP: Expecting is maybe – I suppose you could say expected too, yes. I mean I think even as a child you see your parents working hard day in day out, there's a sense of obligation to at least help. I think it's part of our DNA to help our parents and our family in whatever way we can, so as I got older I came to the conclusion I was fit and able so I could do that.

OH: And your sisters, were they involved as well?

RP: Yeah, they did so too in between going to school and growing up; it was an interesting life, yeah very interesting. I suppose we're probably in terms of from a generational perspective I'd say that I'm at the end of the spectrum of children of migrant market gardeners who worked on the land because then I went to university and didn't pursue a career on the land per se, although it's always remained fond with me in terms of my gardening is my form of meditation. And my connection with my parents as well.

OH: So growing up did you speak Italian at home?

RP: My first language was Italian, well it was like an Italian dialect, it wasn't Italian Italian because my parents, despite they grew up in an era where schooling wasn't the norm back in Italy, so when they came out very resourceful intelligent people, but not educated per se.

OH: And they'd been here a number of years by the time you were born, so were they reasonably fluent in English by that stage?

RP: I think they got by, but I think the downside of having lived in a community that had a high proportion of Italians in the community meant that they didn't have to travel very far to find someone who spoke their language and generally speaking they gravitated to others to help them with translations and with getting things done that involved English as the form of communication. So much the same as what occurs today with migrants that've come into and refugees that have come into Australia, they rely on other family members and friends that speak English a lot better than they do until they-

OH: And we'd do the same if we were going somewhere else.

RP: Yeah, correct.

OH: So your family property was on the corner of sort of Silks Road and Gorge Road?

RP: Correct.

OH: How much land did they have?

RP: It was about 1.4 hectares which doesn't seem like a lot, but there's a lot of market gardening you can do in 1.4 hectares.

OH: And is that because of the soil conditions do you think?

RP: Well, I suppose I'm no expert on the history of that river delta that goes from basically that Gorge Road all the way through to the ford at the bottom of Silks Road and butts up against what is now known as Dernancourt/Highbury that area, but the soil that we used to work was very, very dark, that hibiscus clay which was great during summer because it used to retain the water provided that you watered it, because otherwise if you didn't water it then you'd have these huge cracks appearing and the flipside of that is that during winter it retained the water such that it became a quagmire and working it during summer was more fruitful than working it during winter, but it was hard going in winter especially during very

wet winters, July/august. Many, many times boots have been stuck up to the top, come and help me, I'm stuck in the mud.

OH: And given that did your family do much do you think to improve the soil, what sorts of things did they fertilisers or ...?

RP: Well, in terms of improving the soil, I think the soil is natively very rich in nutrients and organisms, so we – six inches under there's no problems with worms, you don't need a lot of organic matter from my experiences to get very high yielding. I mean one of the things that categorises and this sticks in my memory is that nowadays we go and buy carrots that are grown in Virginia and some of them come from Tasmania and they come from WA, but if you did a blind test the carrots that are grown in Campbelltown and this area around Paradise, the sweetness and they're just to die for. So if you did a blind test you'd soon get a lot of people voting as to what the Campbelltown carrots were because they were just very great to eat, hard work to harvest.

OH: So what did your parents grow mainly on the-?

RP: Well, my parents what the wholesale market community would classify as bunch lines, so things like carrots back in the day - it's amazing that I note that the crops that they grew changed over the thirty or forty years and I can give you a bit of an insight into that, but when they first started they were heavily into what carrots, parsnips, turnips, swedes those sort of root vegetables because appetites and food preferences were, we were very much a steak and three veg society back then. And that would've been in the sixties, the late fifties and the sixties and then as we progressed more into when I was around picking radishes and parsley and spring onions and spinach and silver beet, we were getting more into the leafy vegetables and the shorter cycle time to grow the vegetables so that you were sowing and you were cropping a lot more frequently. And the footprint that you needed to harvest a good crop was a lot lower, a lot smaller and the prices were quite good, so they started off doing like I said carrots, swedes, parsnips, turnips and onions, we used to do fresh bunch onions and then we moved more into the spring onions, the parsley, radishes-

OH: The salad.

RP: More the salad type vegetables and even tomatoes, so my Father used to grow outdoor tomatoes which were traditionally – well, they tried to grow the tomatoes because a lot of the tomatoes that were grown in glasshouses in the western suburbs were up at Virginia, whenever you got a really hot spell they'd get burnt, so we were lucky enough to have that really rich soil and so as long as you kept the water up to the tomatoes there were harvests or there were summers that we were very lucky where we got very good yields.

OH: And do you know what varieties?

RP: And good prices.

OH: What sort of varieties they grew?

RP: Well, it's funny you mention varieties, I mean romas were the ones that they did grow, but my Father actually was one of the first people in the area to grow cherry tomatoes and back in the day, nobody wanted cherry tomatoes.

OH: No, they were new.

RP: They were new and so my Dad used to sell to some of the retailers cherry tomatoes in ten kilogram boxes which by the end of when he grew cherry tomatoes and they became more popular, then they were being put into the 250/300 gram punnets.

OH: The little containers.

RP: But at the beginning nobody wanted them and so some of his more loyal retailers would say okay, I'll take them and then as they became more popular then he started growing them again. We also used to grow baby beetroot and baby turnips and heirloom carrots and nobody – they weren't popular.

OH: I was going to say was there a market for those?

RP: Well, I think that he was trying to establish a market, but again on a back of that traditional diet, now they're all the rage. So in terms of getting back to your question about how we would enrich is generally speaking we'd rotate the crops. One the things that my parents weren't a great fan of is the use of pesticides and herbicides; I wouldn't say they were organic gardeners, but they certainly applied a lot more of the biodynamic principles than what larger scale commercial operations would espouse because of the yield aspects, but we used to do a lot of crop rotation so for example, during winter we would enrich the soil by planting broad beans and peas with the view that when spring came you would rotary hoe that into the ground to inject some nitrogen in there. The other things that they would do were rotate crops so for example, they'd grow garlic and then on top of that you'd plant things like carrots or any vegetable that is susceptible to pests and a lot of pests, you'd plant them on top of onions and garlic you see.

OH: So natural?

RP: Because of the natural, the soil is naturally, the remnants of the garlic in the soil and the onions-

OH: That companion planting.

RP: Yeah, companion planting. So they're sort of some of the things they did and I don't know whether they did so scientifically or whether they did it because that's what they grew up doing back home-

OH: Trial and error.

RP: Trial and error and that's what worked.

OH: And so your Mum and your Dad were both working on the land, did they have other people come and work at all?

RP: There were periods of time where apart from their children, there were periods of time where they would have other Italian ladies that had, maybe whose husbands were working at General Motors, Holden or at Chrysler or some other factory that would come and help with picking, weeding, tending to the land. It was a lot of them were dressed in the traditional black attire especially the widows, but it wasn't easy.

OH: No, it's hard, hard outdoor work.

RP: Eighteen degree sunny day is the ideal, but if you consider how many eighteen degree sunny days do we get in a year you think that we have extremes on the hot side and you have extremes on the wet side and you don't, you wouldn't take one verses the other because being in – having your hands in wet soil, cold water for eight to ten hours a day verses the heat you don't know which one you'd take because one saps you for energy and one freezes you.

OH: Freezes you, yeah. You mentioned a moment ago that you'd rotary hoe the beans in, so did you have other tractors or other farm implements that-?

RP: Well, when my parents first came out they didn't have any of those instruments.

OH: Right, so it was all my hand?

RP: Yeah, it was by hand to begin with but that probably precedes my time and well, it precedes my time in the sense that due to the weather there were times when for example, if you have a wet winter you couldn't get in there with a tractor because by virtue of the soil and yet if you're going to get bogged with your rubber boots-

OH: Rubber boots.

RP: Then the tractors going to – many a time either my Dad or my neighbours got bogged and somebody else had to come and help un-bog us from the heavy soil because the soil underneath stays quite wet, so it dries above in that first twelve inches, but below it gets quite wet, so you consider a tractors quite heavy. So during early spring when we were required to till the soil and prepare for another crop to go in there were periods of time where we would still hoe them with a hoe fork, so it's like a fork but made as a hoe to basically fork the soil to till it over ready for planting for the next crop that you wanted to put in.

OH: So were you doing that after school or-?

RP: Yeah, after school.

OH: And from what age do you think you were doing that sort of work?

RP: Oh look, I think that as I got older the duties became a bit more onerous, but in terms of when I was four for five, six years of age it was carrying things, carrying things from the harvest point onto the tractor, helping wash the vegetables, helping pick the vegetables, but nothing in terms of ploughing the land. But as I got a bit older and you see your parents out there doing it you come to the conclusion I can do that, so you help out.

OH: So what from your memories when do you think were the busiest times of the year?

RP: Easter and Christmas by far.

OH: Yeah and so what are your memories of that being Easter and Christmas and busy?

RP: Very busy in the sense that my father was very fortunate to supply some fairly large retailers in some big shopping centres and they, in that week before Christmas there were days where I'd get sick of picking parsley, I'd get sick of picking spring onions. There were times where, not at Christmas time but during the year that I would basically go and help especially when it's hot, help my parents before school and having to wash my hands with White King because otherwise I'd get to school and my hands would smell of spring onions.

OH: And what school were you going to as a child?

RP: Primary school I went to Campbelltown Primary.

OH: Right, so locally.

RP: On the corner of Gorge Road and Darley Road there and then my parents sent my brother and I up to St Ignatius College which was just up the road, so they chose to send us

to schools that were close that served the purpose of getting us home quickly or getting me home quickly to help. No, I'm only joking; I don't think that was their intention.

OH: I imagine there were other market garden family kids at school with you?

RP: Yeah, correct. Not that many at St Ignatius though, but there were some.

OH: And so you said it was a fairly strong community of the market gardeners, what about the Anglo or the non-Italian market gardeners, did you mix much as families with them at all?

RP: No, not really. I think that that was a function of the majority of the non-Italian market gardeners were in the celery and cauliflower business that was closer to the river because they took water from the river. We were more the small bunch line, the items so I'm pretty sure my Dad would've had a close association with them because as he used to take his produce to the East End market in the city and the retailers and wholesalers would – so we'd pack the truck at night and he would take the produce to the market and he had standing retailers and standing wholesalers that would buy the produce from him and he probably knew them, but I was always attending to the truck to make sure that when a customer came I was there to either give them the produce or I was there ready to take them to produce on those carts that they used to have which used to be drawn by horse and cart in the day, but in the market after the horses weren't around we used to cart them by hand.

OH: So how old were you when you started going to market with your Dad?

RP: Oh look, I think initially when I was five or six, it was like an excursion.

OH: An adventure.

RP: I actually when I was at high school started working for one of the fruit and wholesale merchants in there, I used to work for Pat Scalzi from when I was fourteen years of age. He used to come and pick me up at home twelve thirty a.m. on a Monday morning when I was fourteen during the school holidays.

OH: And so you'd go in early, early in the morning?

RP: And get to the wholesale markets at one o'clock and then he'd drop me off home at twelve thirty, one o'clock in the afternoon, have a sleep and then go and help Mum and Dad in the garden. Obviously that was during school holidays rather than-

OH: Term time. So what did you do in there?

RP: So suffice to say I didn't go to schoolies when I graduated from high school, there was no Victor Harbour for me.

OH: You were busy working. And what sorts of jobs did you do in the market then?

RP: Oh look, I did a range of things, I worked for Pat right through to my uni days, so even after I finished university I still worked for Pat on a part-time basis and he was very good to me, he was very good to our family as well and so I presume, I mean my Father must've gotten me the job, he would've said my son's ready to come and work for someone else because the sun beating down on his head is getting to him a bit.

OH: You'd be better in the market than here.

RP: He might be. I'm just trying to recollect what I was going to say. Yeah, so packing orders, I did some cashier work at one point in time. I think Pat realised that I could add up fairly well, I could add numbers. Loading, unloading, inspecting produce, helping retailers select what they want, packing orders, getting ready for dispatch of orders and stuff like that.

OH: And was that unusual to have someone of your age in there or were there other young people?

RP: Oh no, I don't think I was – no, there were other guys my age.

OH: So it was quite common?

RP: Yeah, it was quite common. It was a different era.

OH: Yeah. So your parents kept that property but did they expand on that at all or did they start to sell it off or-?

RP: Oh look, I think that my Dad did have another piece of land at Rostrevor but with five kids I think that they had their hands full enough with what they had on the go. No, expansion wasn't probably one of those things that were on the cards. They were happy with their lifestyle that they had.

OH: They had enough. And so how long did they work that land for, you said about thirty odd years was it?

RP: I'm just trying to think exactly when Dad gave it up. I think even into his late seventies on a part-time basis he always worked the land because he used to take some of his produce to Tony and Mark's at Jan Street who he'd supplied for a number of years. And so I think there was a fair bit of mutual respect there between Tony, Mark and my Dad because

my Dad would've ... because they're from ... as well, so they're from there and my parents knew their parents. And so he was – I think my mother retired because my mother's health, I think the years of child bearing and hard-core labour in the garden took its toll.

OH: Long days.

RP: And I think this is a generational thing that they don't know when to give up because I remember my Father-

OH: Work is life.

RP: Yeah, work is life and life is work. My Father there's no use living – I'm living like a lion, when I become a lamb then it's all over.

OH: Yes.

RP: And that was their – there was no going to the gym for them, it was working out in the garden, right.

OH: So social life for them or socialising or relaxation, do you have any memories of that?

RP: It was mainly around immediate family and immediate friends.

OH: And the church I imagine? No, not so much?

RP: Not necessarily, no.

OH: No.

RP: No, I mean from an acquaintance perspective but not, it wasn't, for me parents it wasn't certainly a hub as it might've been for others. Five kids.

OH: Yeah, so do you remember any of those sorts of social gatherings or social times from your childhood? What are some of your earlier memories of that down time?

RP: We used to have big parties, my parents used to grow their own chickens.

OH: I was going to ask about animals, so you had chickens?

RP: Yeah, chickens; we used to grow our own chickens and a chicken cull was a full day exercise, so it wasn't a case of we're going to kill half a dozen, it was like we're going to kill twelve dozen or eight dozen or ten dozen.

OH: Oh.

RP: And then they ... for my parents and particularly my Mother getting a freezer was an amazing gift because they were very resourceful, they would grow their chickens, they would cull them and they would keep some fresh and then put some in the freezer.

OH: And did they sell chickens as well if they were killing that amount?

RP: No. Well, apart from giving them to family and friends.

OH: Right, so family and friends would come on chicken culling day would they?

RP: Maybe, sometimes.

OH: Sometimes. Okay, so when did your property because it's now housing isn't it?

RP: Effectively, yeah.

OH: So is any of the land left still being worked at all?

RP: No, the only bit that, no. What's left is probably just under a thousand square metres that I tend too and just grow things during summer more than anything else just as a hobby garden.

OH: So you work that as a hobby?

RP: Mm.

OH: But the rest of the land was sold off at some stage?

RP: Yeah, at some stage. That started basically when my parents got to that retirement age in the late eighties, that late eighty time frame. There was no concept of superannuation.

OH: No.

RP: Their land was their superannuation, so when they got to that age they basically said well, we're not going to take it with us so we'll sub-divide it.

OH: And I imagine a lot of the land in the area was being sold?

RP: Which is, it's very sad not from that aspect, but from the aspect that because of the richness of the soil that this whole area ideally if it was still market garden territory it would be very, very fruitful and very lucrative to – the unfortunate thing is that the price of land went up over time you see, now they grow things in Virginia; I don't know what the – I'd hate to think, well soil might be okay there but-

OH: Not the same.

RP: Based on what I've seen I don't think it compares.

OH: No. Yes and I'm not sure we'd work the sorts of intensity in ours that our parents generation were prepared to put in.

RP: Yeah, although nowadays you wouldn't have to do that, you wouldn't have to work those hours because you'd be able to do so with a bit more automation in terms of obviously apart from the weather if you had bigger plots of land you'd be able to work it more efficiently than what my parents did.

OH: And have any of your brothers or sisters stayed within the market gardening kind of area?

RP: No, my father had a cousin that, whose since passed away, both my father's cousin and my father have passed away, but they have a market garden on Maryvale Road near Foxfield and they still, his son, Joe's son Eric still does market gardening, but-

OH: They've sold that now haven't they?

RP: I don't know about that, have they? It's still being worked. I only saw Eric out there the other day.

OH: I believe in July this year.

RP: Oh, okay well then I didn't know that.

OH: Okay and so the best things about having a market garden from your families perspective, what do you think the benefits and positives that came out of it for your family?

RP: That's an interesting question. Strong sense of family and community that's for sure. I remember growing up and we used to grow iceberg lettuce and we used to pick it and eat it straight out of the garden or even carrots still with the smell of the soil on it and just get a knife and peel them back and eat them and it was just to die for in terms of the quality of the food. There was a great sense of I think being outdoors was definitely one of the positives.

For me the garden was a place for in a funny way, even though it was harsh, but it was a place where I could collect my thoughts and meditate so to speak, think about things. When you're picking parsley from six a.m. or six-thirty a.m. till three in the afternoon bunch after bunch after bunch in that pre-Christmas period a lot of things that you can think about.

OH: And you still live on the land, so is that connection to the land been important as well, that sort of sense of history and family?

RP: I think the connection to the land yes, not necessarily the connection to that land.

OH: Okay.

RP: So the connection – look, put it this way, I still harvest my own seeds today, so I still make my own eggplant seeds, I still make my own capsicum seeds, I still make my own spinach seeds, cos lettuce seeds, I still make my own. My parents used to make onion seeds as well, but I struggle with those, I never get them to fill out right. But yeah, so-

OH: And what about your brother and sisters, do they do any of that sort of gardening at home?

RP: Oh, I think they garden at their own homes, yeah and if I ... like the other day I picked some ... I've got this variety of climbing beans that I picked and shared with some of my siblings.

OH: And you collect the seed I presume for those too?

RP: Yeah, dry them out.

OH: So you've got those ready to go?

RP: Yeah.

OH: So they're some of the benefits, from your memories as a child what do you think were the challenges, the biggest challenges growing up on a market garden?

RP: It's a thankless job that's for sure.

OH: Hard work.

RP: It is hard work. Look, getting back to what I was saying about tomatoes, there were times where my parents would throw in extra tomato plants during summer with the view of seeing whether they were lucky enough to get a good harvest and get good prices. And so

there's a risk element to that. One of the negatives is when you don't get a good price but you get a bumper harvest you still have to tend to them, you still have to water them, you still have to pick them, you still have to look after them, tender them and the same thing with anything that you put down, you sow; they say you reap what you sow, but you reap what you sow at the right price because if – there were times where we would plant like I said iceberg lettuce and prices were good, you'd pick a box of iceberg lettuce, you'd make decent money by virtue of the fact that during summer the soil is good, good fruit, good yield; hopefully the price is right. Then there are times when the yield was good right and we get a hail storm-

OH: Oh.

RP: And then what happens is the yield goes down but the price goes up, so it's a case of – and as you'd know with rain there are bands, some people – market gardeners down the road for example, with the Michell's on Avenue Road got their crop was wiped out and ours was okay, so they get nothing for their crop, we make hay while the sun shines.

OH: I presumed you had mains water as the watering?

RP: Yeah, that's right. Some of the market gardens in the area did have bores, we had mains water by virtue of where we were and mains water was very cheap up until probably the late eighties. It's funny that my parents and a lot of, and a number of the market gardens in the area did quite well from a financial perspective in that seventies to mid-eighties period. Then it became a lot harder from just using the techniques that they'd applied before became a lot harder because the cost of water went up, the prices stabilised; there was a big push of people moving to Virginia and growing the same things in Virginia, so the price came down; they had bore water. And people buy produce on what it looks like and the price, they don't buy it on how good it is for you and what it tastes like. This is one of the things that has astounded me throughout my life, in that we've really got our fruit and veg labelling laws all wrong way around. We can go to a fruit shop or we can go to Coles and Woolworths and they're under no obligation to tell us what that particular piece of fruit or vegetables been sprayed with and yet we put all these hoops for people that-

OH: Are growing.

RP: That are growing organically, should be the other way around shouldn't it? The onus of trust is on the person growing organically, not on the person whose – because I reckon if I was a betting person-

OH: Good point.

RP: If there was a requirement to disclose exactly the genealogy and traceability of what went onto a piece of fruit or vegetable to take it from sowing stage to table stage, I bet you you'd walk out and say gee, I'm not buying that thing; a lot of things have touched that.

OH: Yeah, totally agree.

RP: But anyway, I mean-

OH: So is there anything else you'd like to add to this interview about your growing up or your parents' experience of market gardening here in Campbelltown?

RP: Not really, I mean we could sit and talk about this for *ad nauseum*, because there are stories that – Sam Mercorella who was our next door neighbour who I believe you're interviewing ...

OH: This morning.

RP: Oh, you interviewed him this morning? Okay, when I was growing up and my bedroom window was facing Gorge Road because we lived on the corner of Gorge Road and Silks Road and he must've had semi-trailers coming to either deliver or pick up produce and they used to park on the corner of Gorge and Silkes Road, and I'd hear them stop and hear them go up the road. You know where the Bianco site is?

OH: Mmnn.

RP: Just to change the subject, there used to be a saw mill there. Yeah, they used to be a saw mill and they used to take delivery of logs and what not because we used to go and play there.

OH: So it would've been more or less like a rural community when you were a child?

RP: Oh yeah, absolutely, it was very rural. Silkes Road was gravel.

OH: Oh.

RP: Yeah, it wasn't even a sealed road.

OH: And now it's quite a main road.

RP: Now it's quite a main road, yes and also a lot of the market gardeners that were along the river were able to take water out of the River Torrens which obviously they can't do now ...

OH: No.

RP: Nor probably they shouldn't have been able to do it back then either, but ...

OH: Times change. Do you still have any contact with any of the families from when you were growing up?

RP: Oh yeah, I'm friends with basically all the neighbours and their children, so they had children and we're family and friends. So from that aspect we've kept that community going, that we still bump into each other, see each other, talk to each other. So that's something that will take some time to get diluted because other people will live there and it'll be just another suburb.

OH: Yeah, but it was more of a community?

RP: It was known as Paradise Gardens.

OH: Okay, so it's even changed names.

RP: Mm. Many, many moons ago.

OH: Well, thank you; that's been really interesting to hear that history of the Campbelltown market garden.

RP: Well it was more my recollection of my-

OH: Childhood.

RP: My childhood and my interaction with it.

OH: And will contribute to the broader project to hear those generations of different experiences.

RP: And probably the last one, that last of the generation before things moved on.

OH: And out to Virginia and so on.

RP: Yeah. And I mean there are others, I mean the number of people that I've come across whose parents or who were market gardeners in the area that I didn't even know who they were, there's quite a few of them, quite a number of them.

OH: Well, it was all market gardens wasn't it?

RP: Correct, they were all market gardens, it just gives you an indication of what the lifestyle that they led, that they were too busy working in the garden, they didn't have a lot of time to socialise.

OH: No, okay well thank you. I will just press stop now.

RP: You may, yes.