

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

**Oral history interview with Crescenzo (Charlie) D'Angelica**  
**Recorded by Maria Crisci at Newton**  
**recorded by Maria Crisci on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018.**  
**at Newton, South Australia**

**Interview OH1130/8**

**Participants:**

**OH:** Maria Crisci

**CD:** Charlie D'Angelica

**OH:** This interview is with Crescenzo Charles D'Angelica – Charlie D'Angelica recorded by Maria Crisci on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018 in his home in Newton. This interview forms part of the City of Campbelltown Council Oral History project – Our Fruitful Record – a History of Market Gardening in Campbelltown. Thank you for agreeing to take part in this market gardening oral history project. Now what is your full name?

**CD:** It's Crescenzo.

**OH:** And what is your date of birth?

**CD:** 1923, September 22.

**OH:** Where were you born Charlie?

**CD:** St Marcos ...-

**OH:** And is that Northern Italy, Southern Italy?

**CD:** No Southern Italy.

**OH:** What was your Dad's name?

**CD:** Antonio, Angelo.

**OH:** And your Mum?

**CD:** Dorena.

**OH:** And did you have brothers and sisters? What are the names of your siblings?

**CD:** The brothers?

**OH:** Yeah and sisters?

**CD:** Yeah one Giovanni Marco and Michael, and then my two sisters, Angelina, Pellegrina.

**OH:** Pellegrina. And when did your Dad come to Australia?

**CD:** About 1927.

**OH:** And what about you?

**CD:** 1936.

**OH:** 1936, do you know why your Dad migrated to Australia?

**CD:** I think he used to be home and I think the what's a name? My uncle – my grandfather he was the boss and the other brother – what's the name? S... he used to be a body builder you know – he used to be a body builder but my Dad – my grandfather would give an amount to kill a pig ... and my Dad's said well bugger – he got his own job and he still eat ... so he decided to go to America, and then Dad went to America and then the war broke out and the factory where he worked in America they used to make a lot of railway there, but then when a war broke out they all finished out no job so they all finished up no job. So he went back home and he called in the Italian Army, and then after that my Dad didn't renew the passport to go back to America and then ... he couldn't go to America. So this Joe La Vista he happened to come to Australia and Joe La Vista he used to take about – I forgot – a bit of money-

**OH:** 900 liras.

**CD:** To nominate and of course, yeah he had to pay about 500 liras or something 700 liras or something and they come in, but if they nominate – he didn't find a job you go back home – the government didn't want to know you – you come on – take a chance – that's how it was and the same as America.

**OH:** Yes.

**CD:** If you went to America – he was by himself – if you couldn't find a job you get on a boat and go back to Italy.

**OH:** Go back to Italy. So that was the World War I, so he came here after World War I.

**CD:** World War I, yeah.

**OH:** World War I he came to Australia. So that was in 1927 he came to Australia?

**CD:** Yeah, Dad went there while he was single – he wasn't married and Dad married his wife and she only lasted six weeks and she died with a Spanish flu.

**OH:** Was that in Italy was it? In Italy?

**CD:** In Italy and then he married again – so Mum was the second wife.

**OH:** Okay.

**CD:** But the first one, he was only married for six weeks and she died of Spanish flu – they died by the dozens. They are busy – they couldn't get anybody to dig graves – that's how bad it was. Spanish flu they call it.

**OH:** And so when did your father marry your mother – after that the second time?

**CD:** Well she must have married the-

**OH:** That was Dorena?

**CD:** Oh I wouldn't know but I should say it must have been .... Yeah, because they had my sister there.

**OH:** Pellegrina she was the first?

**CD:** Must have been pretty close yeah.

**OH:** And your father came to Australia first?

**CD:** 1927.

**OH:** And he came on his own?

**CD:** On his own.

**OH:** And what did he do when he came here?

**CD:** He worked for Packer in a garden up at Athelstone up over here.

**OH:** Yeah the Packer family, and what was he doing? Working in the garden?

**CD:** Yeah carrying cauliflowers on the back and when it rains it pours all down the – what a terrible job – I have done that too.

**OH:** You did it as well?

**CD:** Only a little bit – in the morning they used to pick these cauliflowers or cabbage – at that time we had no coat or nothing and you just put them over your shoulder and the water used to drain down – they were bloody cruel.

**OH:** You were born in Italy?

**CD:** Yeah.

**OH:** And how old were you when you came out to Australia?

**CD:** About 11 and a half.

**OH:** Who did you come with to Australia?

**CD:** I came on a boat.

**OH:** And did you come with your family? Your Mum?

**CD:** Yeah I came with my sister Mark, John, Pearl and myself – four of us yeah.

**OH:** Four of you came?

**CD:** And we came here and the funny part, when we landed at Port Pirie we came to South Australia it rained all the way from Port Pirie right ... it just kept raining and raining, and I will never forget this bus that picked us up and you know Australia had all the animals outside you know – sheep and everything – and my late Mum said: “What are those sheeps and cows all outside?” When I talked to Mum I said this is not Italy this is Australia – everything in the open.

**OH:** They were all out in the open?

**CD:** Yeah, but I will tell you what if this happened in Italy you wouldn't get them the next day – you had them come up and look and you had to have shepherd – what are they called? – When we used to take a cow's sheep and that we thought we would look after them.

**OH:** This is Italy, so you used to shepherd the sheep and look after the cows?

**CD:** Yeah we used to look after the sheep – we used to look after the cows and well my late Mum used to give us – when we used to take the – from where we stay at St Marco's where we used to go a farming place out ... out there – what do you call it? We go there and we had this ... straw house and the house where we used to keep the cows and the donkey and the sheep we used to have them outside and we had a great big wall all with stones around. And anyhow, one night the wolf comes around and frightened our sheep, and lucky our dog

– my grandfather’s dog he had a collar around with all nails around you know – otherwise the wolf would have killed our dog, and while is that the whole bloody sheep they jumped nearly – the jumped this place – we had all stones around and anyhow after a while my grandfather got a ram and load her up and we followed the sheep – and they must have went from here to Glenelg – they got frightened and we followed with Dad – grandpa and we used to watch it – with the sheep when they used to drop in and eventually we got nearly – walked about an hour or two hours and eventually we found the sheep there. But my Grandpa always had a favourite sheep – he had a name – she was the most intelligent as the rest of them. You wouldn’t believe it ... some animals have brought ... and my grandfather called out to her – she had a bell on her on the neck and she came around and it wasn’t touched because our dog shooed them off but they are fairly ... dog – the same dogs that you use here for a – to keep the foxes away at Kangaroo Island.

**OH:** Oh right.

**CD:** They are good watch dogs, you know – they are very big.

**OH:** So going back to when you arrived – you arrived in Port Pirie – when you first arrived where did you go and live? Who did you live with or where did you live?

**CD:** We went to live at a place down at Newton there.

**OH:** Because your Dad was here at the time? Your father was here?

**CD:** Oh yeah Dad was here – we lived in one of the – at night time we lived in one of the houses – Domenic D... was going to get his family out – I have forgot their name now – on the Gorge Road – at night time Dad had nothing – we slept on the floor with a mattress down there, and then Dad found this place they called Parkinson, down by the church there. You know where the church down there?

**OH:** You mean Athelstone church or down at St Martin’s church?

**CD:** No down there – the brothers there.

**OH:** You mean the Catholic church?

**CD:** Yeah.

**OH:** Oh St Francis of Assisi?

**CD:** Yeah that place there – there was Tom Forgeri ...

**OH:** Oh yes.

**CD:** This bloke used to have a dairy – used to deliver milk at Parkinson and we shared the place there, and then we went to live at a house what they call it? Bells Road – that’s Stradbroke-

**OH:** Stradbroke Road now that’s correct.

**CD:** Yeah, used to belong to Mrs Ryan.

**OH:** Okay.

**CD:** And Mrs Ryan said the afternoon she had gone to collect the rent all day Saturday afternoon – she had about 50 houses and bloody – you name it – she had all that property where the Ryan avenue – all that.

**OH:** Yes that was all her property?

**CD:** She had all on Stradbroke Road she had that there and then she had another three to four houses on Gray Street.

**OH:** And did she own a market garden? What did she do?

**CD:** Yeah she used to have 11 people working for her.

**OH:** 11 people – and what kind of garden did she have? What can you remember?

**CD:** Oh cauliflowers; potatoes; tomatoes and she had a big dam there on Ryan Avenue and they used to use her water to water, but when the – she used to grow trombones and all of that and she used to plant the tomatoes here and she had to whirl ... the water was a bit salty and not very good. She used to water a distance from the thing there. The water would drain to the things there and she used to have ... she had onions and she used to grow potatoes; tomatoes, all that. She had a row of figs. We used to pick figs ... we used to sell them. I think she had a row of loquats as well.

**OH:** How much land did she have?

**CD:** Oh she must have had about 40-50 acres there but she had where the quarry is on ... there.

**OH:** Yes.

**CD:** Then she had a property down Payneham; she had houses all over the place, and you wouldn’t believe it she left all the property to her two nieces and she made it so they weren’t allowed to sell it. She didn’t want them to sell it so what they did, they got themselves into debt and they sold it and one went to buy a big farm in the South East about 12,000 sheep – Jim and the other one Bob – what do you call it? After that, Jim passed away and the other

one – and his sons got the lot. In about two years he splashed the whole lot – casino all over the world – it just went like that.

**OH:** All that hard work was?

**CD:** That's what they told me.

**OH:** That's all here. So that's Mrs Ryan. Did your Dad own any land? You said that your Dad worked on Montacute?

**CD:** Well, Dad had land in Italy.

**OH:** In Italy? And what about in Australia?

**CD:** But it was in his grandfather's name – he couldn't touch it, you know.

**OH:** Okay.

**CD:** And then he bought some land over there – he bought 14 acres of land and then made a well there and then built a little house on it, and Dad was going to come back and then he realised – he said: “Well, I've got three boys. What are they going to do there?”

**OH:** Oh in Italy so he came back to Australia?

**CD:** And he decided to come to Australia.

**OH:** And did your Dad own any land in Australia at all?

**CD:** Oh yeah 17 acres.

**OH:** 17 acres and where was what?

**CD:** Down Church Road, five acres, and 12 acres here, up by the shopping [centre].

**OH:** You mean the shopping centre at Coles?

**CD:** Top of my place there.

**OH:** Your place near Bells Road – it was called Stradbroke Road?

**CD:** Yeah.

**OH:** When did he buy that land? Did he lease it or did he own it?

**CD:** He bought it off a bloke ... Fullarton.

**OH:** His name was Mr Fullarton?

**CD:** And you wouldn't believe it Mary – what's her name – my Dad sold an acre land to my sister and brother-in-law and when they measure out my Dad had a quarter of a block of land belong to next door that wasn't his. So then what do you call – when the surveyor came along and Con bought it he said when he told Dad, he said I had to plant the carrots under your window there, and it's my sister ... Anyhow, that time, land wasn't worth very much so Dad paid that piece of land to do ... and left it like that, but it's right up the bloody windows.

**OH:** The windowsill. And did your Dad work on the land?

**CD:** No, he worked for Wicks early.

**OH:** Packer you said?

**CD:** He worked for Hobbs down there.

**OH:** Hobbs-

**CD:** He worked for Packers and he worked for ... and then gradually started working for himself after the War – through the War and at that time, Dad had nothing – no horse or nothing you know. It was what do you call it – he grew some rockmelons. We used to sell them by the reservoir there and Dad used to take them there with a pushbike. You know put them on the ...

**OH:** What a good idea, so he didn't have any equipment or anything but he grew rockmelons. How clever was that? Watermelon or rockmelon?

**CD:** Rockmelon.

**OH:** Rockmelon and who used to buy it? Who bought the rockmelon?

**CD:** He planted just like that but at that time it was so easy, only get a couple of rains. We used to get about four-five pound a week ... every weekend ... more than Dad used to get for work – double and then Dion they started growing rockmelons and they started selling them and what do you call it ... and after that we didn't bother any more.

**OH:** Bother any more-

**CD:** And then Dad started to going to the market and eventually had a trolley – had it made by stock with four wheels and he had a horse and the old horse used to work the garden and he goes to the market as well.

**OH:** So which market was that? That was the East End?



**CD:** East End market.

**OH:** East End market – do you remember where that was?

**CD:** Oh around the middle there. Near where garden supply was.

**OH:** Was that near the hospital or East End? Was it East End?

**CD:** It was about two acres there.

**OH:** Oh it was two acres of ...

**CD:** There was fruit growers and market thing ... soldiers' produce – there was so many.

**OH:** What's the soldier's produce – what's that?

**CD:** They used to sell fruit – oranges – a lot of that. Another one – I forgot their name they used to buy carrots, potatoes and all that, and then Joe Potts, he was a potato merchant. He used to sell onions and potatoes.

**OH:** Did your Dad grow potatoes or onions?

**CD:** Oh yeah.

**OH:** So you said that your father used to work for Packers and Hobbs and the Wicks and all that. Do you remember when he started the market garden at Stradbroke?

**CD:** In the War time, would have been about 1940 I suppose.

**OH:** 1940 that's when he started, so he had a horse?

**CD:** He started growing a few carrots and all that, and then he finished up ... got a little trolley done by Stock<sup>1</sup> and he used to go to the market with a horse and trolley.

**OH:** So when you say done by Stock, is that Mr Stock?

**CD:** Yeah down here.

**OH:** Yeah he used to-

**CD:** Made him a trolley with four wheels.

**OH:** Yes, that Mr Stock used to be on Lower North East Road.

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<sup>1</sup> Stock was the local blacksmith and worked in Campbelltown

**CD:** Yeah down there.

**OH:** AJ Stock yeah – okay so that was in the ‘40s ... what were you doing at the time? So you would have been-?

**CD:** I worked for Wicks for four years.

**OH:** Four years, so how old were you? You were 12 when you came out. Did you go to school when you came?

**CD:** Yeah I had two years.

**OH:** Okay.

**CD:** The first year I couldn’t understand a word; the following year I learnt all the bad words.

**OH:** Tell me your experience, what it was like when you came out?

**CD:** Well I got a hiding the first time I went to school and I couldn’t understand a word of English. A little boy came up and like that to me – I hit across the face; he go and reported it to the headmaster and the headmaster, he said to me put the hand out. And I thought he wanted to shake hands and I got a bloody cane as long as this table, and I got the cane the first time I went to school. And we were the first Italian family that went to Campbelltown School. There were no others.

**OH:** So you and your sisters ... who went to school? So what do you remember about your childhood; your neighbourhood; your life in those early years with your brothers and sisters?

**CD:** Beg your pardon?

**OH:** What do you remember about your childhood with your brother and sister – you went to school together. What can you remember about your childhood?

**CD:** Well we went to school, my sister and myself and Mark.

**OH:** Mark yeah.

**CD:** And what’s a name? We used to wear shorts in Italy and straight out ... we had long trousers – and had a little button on the side, and I will never forget ... my son-in-law went to get the - one of the Packers used to do ... and he said, I asked him you know ... son-in-law – he married my daughter, you know. He said: “Yeah I remember I went to school with your father-in-law.” He said, I will never forget when he came to Australia ... he used to have little trousers and shorts with a little button on the side. It just stood out you know and

anyhow in the first year I couldn't understand a word of English, but the second year I was learning quite good ... there was a teacher there ... Miss Corbett. She was a lovely lady, she really wanted to teach us, you know, but by that time I went to work at 14 years of age. I went to work at Wicks four years in a nursery there, plants and those things, you know.

**OH:** Yeah and what kind of plants?

**CD:** He grew roses and apples and pears and plums and walnuts, lemons, oranges. He had 18 people working for him. And he used to send all his fruit all over Australia – the plants.

**OH:** The plants yes.

**CD:** And these plants – he had a thing – as big as this table – done like that, and my Dad, his job was in the summer time he would go down the River Torrens and cut all the reeds.

**OH:** The reeds.

**CD:** And they would dry up, so when they – they used to dig all these plants – without dirt around. The olives they used to leave the things – the olives used to leave wooden things around – but the others used to be cleaned and whenever we used to get orders – we used to send them all over Australia – you know, peaches and plums and roses – you name it.

**OH:** All plants?

**CD:** Persimmons – all those sort of things – walnuts.

**OH:** So what was the terrain like around the area – what could you see?

**CD:** That was at Highbury.

**OH:** That was at Highbury ... Wicks Estates was at Highbury.

**CD:** And when it rained a lot we used to go across on a swing bridge. We used to leave the pushbikes on this side here when the old pioneer cemetery is, opposite there.

**OH:** Yes.

**CD:** And then we used to-

**OH:** So just up here, so from Athelstone you used to go across the footbridge to Highbury?

**CD:** To get across.

**OH:** To get across.

**CD:** And then this land has all been taken out by the government – all the flat land – must be nearly 40-50 acres I don't know.

**OH:** And what do they do with it? They took the land?

**CD:** That belonged to the government.

**OH:** The government, right-

**CD:** But he had 150 acres you know.

**OH:** The Wicks?

**CD:** And he had peaches and plums and grape and what's its name? Loquats, you name it.

**OH:** Wow, so near the river that's what he grew around all that area at Highbury?

**CD:** He grew a lot of plants and he used to sell a lot of fruit as well. Used to have bloke called Ron Fry or something like that ... he was a market man and he used to go nearly, twice a week and selling all the fruit you know ... peaches and plums.

**OH:** To the market, to the east?

**CD:** Oranges and lemons and mandarins and you name it ... persimmons, vines ... not there. What else?

**OH:** And how did they used to take all those? How did they used to transport?

**CD:** Truck.

**OH:** They had trucks in those times?

**CD:** Yeah they had a big truck.

**OH:** He had a big truck that he would transport it to the market?

**CD:** Yeah and he had a great big house and they still stand in there.

**OH:** Just at Highbury?

**CD:** On the slope there – they call it Wicks Estate.

**OH:** Yes.

**CD:** I went one day there to have a look.

**OH:** It's different, it's so different to what it was. What's there now? When you saw it?

**CD:** It's all houses there now.

**OH:** Yeah they had good soil – what was the soil like?

**CD:** Yeah, I think it was like ... the flats was a sandy loam but the slope I think was more like black soil all around.

**OH:** Now can you tell us when did you ... so this is your childhood? So you were 14 and you left and you worked on the Wicks. How long did you stay working at the nursery? How long did you do that for?

**CD:** Until 18 years of age.

**OH:** And then what happened after that? What happened?

**CD:** Well we had a blue and he told me he had finished with me and I had finished with him. Then I went to work in a market garden or a fruit grower down Payneham – I only lasted one week – didn't work out. By that time I went to work at Simpson, and by that time I was supposed to go in the Army and the bloke that – the foreman there he wanted me to stay there – they were doing military stuff in the ... department and he couldn't get me out – "No", he said. I should have made out I could only work on one leg I could have stayed – and anyhow he said to me – he said: "Charlie if you go to the war when you come back." He said: "Just bring your lunch – there will always be a job for you." And I never went back and then Simpson had all broke away. Simpson was down the Wakefield Street. They had about 20 acres there – a big factory. They used to make wood stoves and they used to make what else? Washing machines.

**OH:** Yeah, washing machines – yeah Simpson.

**CD:** Billycans and all that, but then they were doing the army stuff.

**OH:** So you went into the Army – you went into the Army at what, 18?

**CD:** Yeah I went in the Army.

**OH:** 18 years of age, you went into the Army?

**CD:** Yeah and I went down Warradale there, and I happened to know most of the ... bloke – and there was a bloke – Ollie Hockley – he was at Woodside and he was called up a lot older there – and he came a sergeant and this day he was down there and I am a big easy going – I went up and – as Ollie went past I said: "Hello Ollie." He never answered. He

walked down from here to the corner there and he turned around and he said: "From now on, Sergeant Hockley to you."

**OH:** Oh dear you knew your position didn't you? And how long were you in the Army for? So you went to Warradale and so then you said you went to Western Australia?

**CD:** 18 years of age – a little over three years.

**OH:** Over three years. And you also went to Western Australia in the Army? You went to Western Australia?

**CD:** New South Wales.

**OH:** New South Wales.

**CD:** Victoria and all those places.

**OH:** And do you remember the regiment you were with? Which regiment were you with?

**CD:** And the aircraft gun, but we started off with the 21 pounds – they used to shoot – and they would change over and they made the ... aircraft guns and there was about four of them – these guns and they could shoot nearly half a mile you know up there and we had six of those batteries – oh with four each battery. So if the plane came there would be four of these batteries they could shoot the plane – if three did miss, the other one would hit it. And we used to have a – this thing they used to drag with a truck – drag it – and we used to take the wheels off back and front and used to lift this gun down – we had all the jacks there and then take the jack away and this gun will land on the soil because when you shoot it will wobble on the wheels so had to be on firm – you know, real firm.

**OH:** And did you actually – this was training – did you actually go to war or this was just ...?

**CD:** We stayed in Western Australia.

**OH:** Stayed in Western Australia.

**CD:** After the time the war finished.

**OH:** And you were a new immigrant – did you get on well with all the other soldiers and that?

**CD:** No.

**OH:** Oh you didn't?

**CD:** Only some – they treated me terrible. I stayed home – I stayed home after I came on leave and I never went back. I was supposed to go back to Western Australia. I didn't go back.

**OH:** And what did you do when you came home? You worked on the land?

**CD:** Oh I worked with the Lomman's there-

**OH:** Oh the Lomman-

**CD:** ... never had anything then and ...

**OH:** So your Dad was still working for other gardeners?

**CD:** Still working for Wicks.

**OH:** Wicks yeah?

**CD:** And the funny part – when my late wife, she worked for Spetzane and the two policemen went ... the policeman would come and pick me up and they put me in gaol and they gave me 28 days gaol – Adelaide Gaol.

**OH:** Right. Because you had left your post?

**CD:** Anyhow nighttime I was stinging with them – they never gave me a cushion – I used to use my boots for the cushion.

**OH:** Wow hard times-

**CD:** Anyhow I complained and there was a bloke there – a couple of other Australian blokes – they were in New Guinea – used to rain every day – that's how bad it was. They couldn't bury the people, the water used to bring them up ...

**OH:** Oh dear.

**CD:** And you know what they had to do – put their mates in heaps – throw petrol over them and burn them.

**OH:** Oh wow is that what someone told you in the gaol?

**CD:** No this is true.

**OH:** True yeah.

**CD:** This bloke might be there and he said: “What the hell you bloody complain for Charlie?” He said: “How would you like to go to New Guinea?” He said the Japanese shoot you one side. What do you call it? And the nighttime the mosquitos ... up – the mosquitos are terrible – a lot of them, they’ve got malaria there.

**OH:** That’s right, it was hard-

**CD:** You know when they get malaria – you know how hot the other day was? This bloke they had to put a blanket over – that’s how cold it - it’s a terrible thing.

**OH:** Yeah it’s awful.

**CD:** Malaria-

**OH:** Yeah it’s an awful disease. Now were you married then or not?

**CD:** No I was single.

**OH:** You were still single?

**CD:** Single.

**OH:** When did you marry? How old were you when you got married?

**CD:** About a little over 21.

**OH:** 21, so it was just a few years after – so you worked in the garden with the Lomman family, and then where else market gardening?

**CD:** I didn’t work anymore when I came out of the Army – I went to work at Simpsons – no Michell’s.<sup>2</sup>

**OH:** Oh Michell’s – the wool people.

**CD:** Wool people.

**OH:** What did you do there?

**CD:** Fellmongering – we used to take the wool off the skins.

**OH:** Yes.

**CD:** When we take the wool off the wool was taken and washed and sent away – the skin was sent to the tannery – the tannery would take – wash them again and all the skin they

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<sup>2</sup> Michell was a wool processing company originally located in Hindmarsh and then in Salisbury South.



used to send them to France, and France used to make shoes out of it and all that sort of thing.

**OH:** Shoes – wow.

**CD:** And then after that I went to work at Dalgety's – cleaner – you know just clean and then I worked there seven years off and on. I started – my garden was going all right and I had grasshoppers turn up and they stripped the whole lot – carrots and lettuce and everything. It well, never forget I was still working and I was open to do ... the job.

**OH:** So you were working at Dalgety's and at the same time you had a bit of a garden?

**CD:** I did the garden.

**OH:** And who was looking after the garden?

**CD:** Well I was going to nearly go full-time when at the start of harvest, and when I arrived home my late wife was crying and she said ... I said: "What's the matter?" And she said: "Have a look what's ..." the back of my old house there then, I had about an acre of carrots, the grasshoppers just-

**OH:** Stripped all the top of the leaves?

**CD:** Stripped the whole bloody lot and they stripped whatever – trees anything around – they would just strip – they even went to Nuriootpa – even stripped the grapes.

**OH:** What year was that? When was that?

**CD:** Oh I should say it would be around the – I would say 60 years ago – not quite sure.

**OH:** So you came out of gaol, worked at Dalgety's, worked at Michell's – then you got married? Did you get married after that or when did you get married?

**CD:** Yeah we got married.

**OH:** What year was that – do you remember?

**CD:** And the funny part we couldn't get a bigger hall so we had it in the shed.

**OH:** Where did you live with your life?

**CD:** Lived with my sister – rented one room and a little verandah on the back with a wood stove there. That was my first home.

**OH:** And where was that?

**CD:** That was where that dentist is there.

**OH:** So on Montacute Road – corner of Montacute?

**CD:** You know where the shops is there? We had a row of almonds there right up, but the government took three quarter of an acre of land from that when they straightened Montacute – the ... was an 's' bend – a road past the shop – go to the top there – then turn down there and around – and they call that the 's' bend.

**OH:** The 's' bend' right. And that was all your land?

**CD:** Not all of it, the top there belonged to Spetzane-

**OH:** Spetzane.

**CD:** And then Spetzane then sold it to Veterans Affairs ... there was so many-

**OH:** But you still kept your land and how many acres did you have? How much land did you have?

**CD:** How many acres I had? Five acres.

**OH:** And your Dad?

**CD:** 12.

**OH:** 12 acres?

**CD:** He had ... he bought another five acres off a bloke called Hobby and he made ... he used to grow – Dad used to grow quite a lot of onions.

**OH:** So that was the main thing?

**CD:** Used to grow about 70 ton, you know.

**OH:** Of onions.

**CD:** Dad was in a big way.

**OH:** Yeah, did you help your Dad?

**CD:** No, I could only help at weekends – no I used to go to work.

**OH:** Yes, so you used to help him on the weekends?

**CD:** We did the dirty work and the rest of them got rich, that's how it happened.

**OH:** Who are the rest? Who are you talking about that got rich?

**CD:** My brother, Mark – he put Mark in partnership at 16 years of age – going to market and come home with 100 bloody pound each ... but Charlie used to go to work and get five pound a week.

**OH:** So tell me you got married in what year? What year did you get married? So you married Pearl – Pellegrina Tomaselli? Was her name Tomaselli?

**CD:** Yeah.

**OH:** And you lived on Gilbert Street or where did you end up living? Where was your house?

**CD:** I lived with my sister-

**OH:** Your sister?

**CD:** Then we bought the old house I showed you – we bought that and in that time there was a price control and this bloke – Eddie White he wanted a thousand 250 pound and he wouldn't accept it so the land agent said to me – he said "Charlie do you still want that property?" It was full of artichokes you know – it was a bloody house – no electric light – nothing – full of bloody rats – it was just a country place and he said if you want it he will take 450 pounds black market, and I said to this land agent – forgot their name now – I said what happens if he changes his mind? He will lose the 450 pounds – that was a lot of money then and then got going and we started cleaning around and we got trodden on - they had an Ellis Charm tractor there and it wasn't strong enough to get out all the bloody artichokes there.

**OH:** Artichokes?

**CD:** So anyhow we finished up we got the ... there with horses and they had these bloody plough thing right to the corner of the thing there – free horses – two horses and one like that – and they used to dig these great big stumps of artichokes. Anyhow then we started growing a bit of lettuce and a bit of that and because the soil was like that, there was a grub underneath there. Anyhow we grew this bloody – about half an acre of lettuce there and the bloody lettuce, it wouldn't move.

**OH:** The grub was-

**CD:** Yeah, a grub used to eat into the roots – anyhow we went to find out what was wrong – we called the agriculture bloke and we had a look at it – and he pulls this thing and there was

all the little grubs eating in the bloody roots there. He could have sold the lettuce but the lettuce wouldn't grow with that. Then we had to put what do you call it? Lindane, in there?

**OH:** Lindane, in there.

**CD:** Poison-

**OH:** Yeah poison.

**CD:** Mix it up with a thing to get rid of it, and then oh we couldn't get ... couldn't buy any fertiliser, nothing and eventually I had a truck ... we used to go right up to Gawler to get a bit of chicken manure or pigeon manure-

**OH:** So you didn't have your own chickens?

**CD:** No it was ... Gawler, Mrs Crook – I took her chicken manure for nearly 40 years. I had to go all the way to Gawler to pick up this chicken manure.

**OH:** So you were trying to fertilise the soil to grow?

**CD:** Yeah.

**OH:** Was it black soil? What kind of soil was it? What was the soil ... what was it like? Was it black soil?

**CD:** Black soil, very heavy.

**OH:** Very heavy.

**CD:** But you mix it, it wouldn't grow unless you put fertiliser there.

**OH:** That's right.

**CD:** Then I used to get the rabbits heads from rabbit wholesale and I used to bury them in and a lot of time I used to put all these rabbit heads and things. I used to put the manure over the top – it used to rot away and then I used to spread it in there and I planted the – I must have been – I was one of the biggest rockmelon growers - that's 60 years or more.

**OH:** And you used to sell the rockmelon?

**CD:** Well the funny part, after I...we worked for Rocky for a little while, then we split up ... and that time they pinched me money and I was even goin' make torrone ... and all that and it didn't work out. It cost me about £3,000. We bought a thing to make the torrone, we bought the almonds, we bought honey and we bought everything and this bloody mob they

were supposed to make the torrone, one night we went to the pictures, they went through our place and found the money.

**OH:** Oh right...it's unfortunate isn't it?

**CD:** And then I went away a trip in the middle of the night and they took money out of my pocket. I went to Whitsunday.

**OH:** Oh you went on a holiday to Whitsunday?

**CD:** I went with Anita Sommariva there – you wouldn't believe it and I was together with Cosimo Parista... he's dead now and in the middle of the night his wallet was taken. I never had a wallet – I had the money in a little pocket here and some change – I was going to ring my family...they took that and I had a watch – they took a watch as well in the middle of the night – you wouldn't believe it.

**OH:** So who in your family worked the market garden? There was you; there was your Dad; there was Mark?

**CD:** I never worked with my Dad.

**OH:** No but who else? There was Mark who worked the market garden you said?

**CD:** Mark used to work with Dad – used to go to the market.

**OH:** Used to go to the market – what did he grow? Where did he grow the vegetables? What did he grow? He grew onions – just onions?

**CD:** Well he was together with Dad. Dad used to grow strawberries and all that and because I worked with what do you call it...Molinara...years ago – I went six weeks they never paid me. That's why I needed a good lawyer to get that money – I never got paid and when I came from work Michell – at nighttime – after 11:00 o'clock we used to put all the strawberries into little punnets.

**OH:** Punnets yeah – so where were the strawberries? They were on your Dad's land were they?

**CD:** Dad used to grow them. He had about half an acre.

**OH:** So you would put all of them in punnets just to help and then sell them at the market?

**CD:** They used to pick them in the day and at night time-

**OH:** You would pack them?

**CD:** Three - four hours, we would put them all into the little things there.

**OH:** Punnets – punnets to sell?

**CD:** Yeah.

**OH:** Now you also mentioned that you worked for the Packers and the Munchenberg's? Did you work for the Munchenberg's?

**CD:** No not me.

**OH:** So you had five acres of land in Gilbert Street, is that right? That's where you grew rockmelon and lettuce?

**CD:** Yeah, potatoes and all that.

**OH:** Potatoes.

**CD:** What do you call it? – Beetroot and all that sort of thing.

**OH:** What challenges – what did you find hard about market gardening? You didn't like market gardening did you?

**CD:** Well it was terrible because we had to do everything with a fork where now it is all done by machinery, but the black soil ... the machinery wouldn't work there. Anyhow I bought one of those little ... what was it now? A little thing to work in between?

**OH:** A rotary hoe – was it a rotary hoe?

**CD:** No a little tiny thing that I forgot what they used to call them. I had salt and it used to clog up and I couldn't work it.

**OH:** It used to till the soil though did it – till the soil?

**CD:** And then we used to grow onions and the onions when they came up we used to hoe them and weed them and all that, and after that you've got to spray them, and we used to spray some stuff – I forget the name – it came from America and then the onions will come up or whatever there and helps them to grow. We used to do like carrots – used to grow with carrots – spray – most of the carrots are now – they don't weed them – they just spray the grass.

**OH:** But did you used to spray them as well or just weeding – did you used to do weeding?

**CD:** Oh yeah, early years we did but after that we would spray them yeah. And then ... that's only why you grow some, so when I worked with Rocky we grew about seven acres of

carrots – that’s a long time ago. We went to what do you call it – a market nearly 11 months of the year – we would take carrots in three times a week - carrots, parsnips, lettuce.

**OH:** Is that Rocky Constanzo – is that your brother-in-law?

**CD:** Yeah, worked together for about four and a half years.

**OH:** Four and a half years together working?

**CD:** Yeah, and then when I come by myself I grew about an acre of rockmelons and everybody said: “What are you doing Charlie?” I said: “I am growing rockmelons.” They said: “You will never sell them.” And you wouldn’t believe it, I’ve never had such a crop of rockmelons like that. You couldn’t walk, there was rockmelons, you would tread on them... that’s our ...

**OH:** Lovely. So it was good? So the soil was good for rockmelon?

**CD:** Lucky I never got another crop like it. The worst thing I used to water too much the others. Rockmelon don’t like too much water and the bloke who used to sell my stuff, Norm Frill, he said: “Charlie, I can’t put the rockmelons on my truck. You have to take them down to where his stand is in the East End Market and he has to take 120 crates of rockmelon.” – Sold the whole lot.

**OH:** That’s in what a week?

**CD:** No, in one lot.

**OH:** In one lot, 120 crates.

**CD:** Yeah and then we picked another 70 crates and then we picked another 50 crates. That time the commission was taken, I finished up with 800 pound. That was good.

**OH:** That was good money and who used to help you to do that?

**CD:** I used to work home there.

**OH:** You used to do it yourself?

**CD:** Yeah.

**OH:** Did your wife work on the land as well or not?

**CD:** Yeah, she helped.

**OH:** She used to help as well.

**CD:** And then we grew parsnips and all that and my late wife used to tie them up – you know the parsnips – they were tied without the top but the carrots we had them all with the top on.

**OH:** Top on.

**CD:** Now they don't have tops any more – it's all changed.

**OH:** Yeah and so how many years would have you done market gardening then because after-?

**CD:** About 30 years ago I gave it away.

**OH:** 30 years ago you gave it away.

**CD:** I sold the property to Spangling and I only sold half of it – about two acres and then I wanted to keep the old house and all the trouble in the world. I wasn't allowed to keep it – I had to bring the sewerage there – water there – god knows what.

**OH:** And that cost money to?

**CD:** And Spangling said what about if I give you \$10,000 for your house. I said no...and my late wife spoke out and said "Dave what about if you build us a little unit there and we can retire when we get old?" And he said: "Well you have to give me \$10,000." I said: "... Not a penny." He said: "Well, I will think about it." After a while he came back and he said: "I will knock the house down and I will build you a unit there." And I had that unit there – I had it rented there for several people. I had some good ones there, very good.

**OH:** So that's how you used to get income from the rental of the property? Yeah.

**CD:** And what do you call it? I bought a unit on Montacute and I sold two units – two blocks of land for one unit and I had to borrow \$28,000 to buy this bloody unit at Montacute, but I had trouble there at Montacute. People wouldn't pay rent and people want this and eventually I got sick of it. I sold the block the one on Montacute – I put it in the bank for me. I sold the one at White Lane, I gave to both of my daughters and then the other piece of land there I cut up a road to give a block of land each to my grandchildren. It cost me over \$100,000 to make that road and so that's why I'm poor.

**OH:** You've got a beautiful home and you've got a lovely garden in your backyard and you've got a family around you which is lovely. When you were ... could you tell me a little bit about how it's changed in the area for you like when you were first ...?

**CD:** What happened was the market garden – the little garden has always starved off – they all got starved off. We had no chance any more.



**OH:** Why was that do you think?

**CD:** Well, a little garden and a big garden came in and they are putting money in the pocket of Coles and Woolworths and all of that. You couldn't go near them any more. They would look at you – a little fry – they used to call us “little fries”. Yeah, most of them of the market garden – they are all now big – Virginia – they went up to the river and the South East ... all those places.

**OH:** So what are some of the changes you've noticed in market gardening over the years in the Campbelltown area? Like from when you first came out, when you first came here, what did you see and how has it changed?

**CD:** We had a poultry farm; we had vineyards; we had what do you call it? – Farmers – people were milking cows.

**OH:** And that's what you saw when you came out – when you first came out.

**CD:** And even down at Robson Jarvis they used to preserve fruit in tins. They used to have up to ninety Italian family there that used to cut up the fruit and put them in tins. That's Robson Jarvis where the school used to be.

**OH:** Yes at Hectorville isn't it?

**CD:** Yeah but years ago all Hectorville and all that it was all fruit trees and they used to all preserve it and then the Fox, he had vineyards there. Fox had cows where Dad worked for them – cows – what do you call them – and then what do you call the...? Some plant ... almonds, what else did they grew? Oh we grew a lot of onions there, a lot of onions and we used to send them away. Not much but a lot of Australian there – on Gray Street there ... you go there and there will bags and bags of onions, used to send them to Victoria.

**OH:** And who were some of the market gardeners along Gray Street that you remember?

**CD:** Oh there were Pope's and Phillips'. Who else was there? Mrs Ryan down there – Mrs Ryan had five acres given to the bloke, Charlie Austin, he had bullocks down there.

**OH:** They had bullocks, that's how they used to work the land?

**CD:** Yeah bullocks there – he used to take bullocks to drink at Morialta Creek there and I will never forget ...

**OH:** So where do they get the water from? Where do they get the water?

**CD:** He used to take them to drink up to the creek up to Morialta there and it was funny, you know, he used to go up on top of Black Hill and he used to bring me some wood on the back of these ...

**OH:** Bullocks?

**CD:** Bullocks, and I was living in my sister's place and he wanted to bring these bloody bullocks – not much room there and of course if you touch – my brother-in-law was looking for trouble you know and I said to Mr Charlie Austin, I said: “Drop them out on the footpath, I will carry them in.” “No, no,” he said. “I will carry them in for you”. This bloody bullock – about four of them I think of six, I can't remember ... he never had reins or nothing – just the whip in the front and he had this bloody thing ... he takes this bloody ... called ... and I was a fair way in – I suppose 100 yards in because the house at that time, all the houses had to built right off the road back that's what they used to do, all the houses, all are built right back.

**OH:** Right back of the property?

**CD:** And you got there, and you wouldn't believe he brought this bullock there – he undone the things and this bloody bullock has just turned around – he never touched the ... nothing – he just – and I said gees I said – and he said to me you know what – he said I could get 50 pound for this little, his bullock ...

**OH:** This bullock yeah?

**CD:** I said why such a big money? He said: “They are so intelligent that they control the rest of it.” And this has happened with the ducks – ducks ... leader – when I used to work in the garden at night time – I had to water for the night, we had no water, the wind used to blow, we couldn't water and I see the ducks at the night time, you know, with the moon and there is ducks all in rows – have you ever seen them?

**OH:** Yes, yes there's always one leader – it's like that?

**CD:** Yeah, he used to go up Black Hill and those bullocks will come down there – the horse couldn't go there but the bullocks could. They got split in the thing there [the hoof] and that's why they grip – the same as a goat.

**OH:** A goat that's right. So why did he go up Black Hill? What was he getting? Wood.

**CD:** He used to go and get wood and he used to sell wood to different people.

**OH:** Because, of course, you had no electricity then did you?

**CD:** Yeah, at that time everybody used a wood stove.

**OH:** A wood stove yeah-

**CD:** And what he used to do – when he got up the top there he used to line up this dray and he would tie a big tree behind that and there was a break and he used to come down opposite Lucy – you know my sister-in-law there.

**OH:** Costanzo's yeah ...

**CD:** Early in the piece you could see where they used to come down there.

**OH:** Yeah, along Maryvale Road isn't it?

**CD:** Yeah, up there.

**OH:** And were there many market gardens along Maryvale Road? Were there a lot of market gardens along Maryvale Road? No?

**CD:** Oh not really.

**OH:** What was there?

**CD:** There was – Arthur used to sell milk and he wasn't there, and Fox was the other side – so Bill Allen used to do a bit of gardening down there and then others ... Mrs Ryan where the college is there?

**OH:** Okay, St Ignatius College, that's where she lived?

**CD:** Yeah, well I picked up potatoes there with Mrs Ryan. We used to go there – there's a church there and everything – I don't know if you have been there lately? Have you been there?

**OH:** Yeah, I know where that is – you mean the Uniting church?

**CD:** By the creek, St Ignatius.

**OH:** Yes, St Ignatius.

**CD:** We picked up potatoes there.

**OH:** They used to grow potatoes?

**CD:** Yeah, and they had a dam up the top and he was getting the water from ...

**OH:** The dam?

**CD:** No the creek and he used to fill up this dam and this dam used to water his potatoes with, no sprinklers, all done by the ground.

**OH:** All by ground. And how did he get the water from the creek to the dam? How did he used to carry it?

**CD:** Well you know where the little bridge is on what is it? Fourth Creek?

**OH:** Yes, Fourth Creek.

**CD:** There he used to bank it up with sandbags-

**OH:** And direct the water?

**CD:** And fill up his dam and this dam happened to be high and when he used to grow potatoes he used to pour the water down there.

**OH:** So anyone that had a market garden near the river had water?

**CD:** Well then down further was a – what's the name – Jack Lorenz.

**OH:** Oh Lorenz yes-

**CD:** He used to grow oh winter-time stuff – cabbage and other stuff but not much and then down further was Schulze – Schulze Road.

**OH:** Yes what did they grow?

**CD:** Then the other one – Mrs Ryan had another three houses with five acres each opposite the Coventry Garage there. And they used to grow onions and a few carrots – you know not much – only a small way. It was ... there.

**OH:** And Charlie, outside of gardening and work how did – what activities did you get involved in outside of market gardening? And what activities – what did you do for your past time? Did you play any sports – what kinds of things did you do?

**CD:** Yeah, when I finished up in the garden?

**OH:** No, while you were doing that – did you just garden or did you play sports as well?

**CD:** No, I work all the time.

**OH:** All the time?

**CD:** I used to grow parsnips a lot – oh nearly two acres of parsnips, hard work but it was good money. We used to dig them – take them in the shed and some day we had to dig this ... there was about 20-30 crates of thing ... and I used to sink up to my tummy. Oh, we couldn't go there with a tractor or nothing.

**OH:** Because of the soil – the way they used to sink into?

**CD:** I never forget one day, Wilson he was a member of Parliament – Ian Wilson – he came there with rubber boots and I was digging these bloody parsnips and it was terrible, you know bloody, every time you step foot you had to clean up to ...

**OH:** Why did he come to visit you?

**CD:** He wanted me to vote for him – he belonged to Sturt and he said: “You know who I am?” I said: “No.” And he said: “I'm Ian Wilson.” He said: “I am going to be your member there.” I said” “Yeah.” He said: “You know, if you vote Labor,” he said: “If Labor gets in they're going to take your land.” And I was really bloody stinking. I said “Mr Wilson they can have the f---ing thing.” (laughs)

**OH:** So gardening wasn't one of your passions? Now I understand that you used to play football for the Raggies. Tell us about that? Tell us about your time?

**CD:** Well, I was married and I was living in the old thing there – and my late wife she was worked at Packers and Dean come and Lance (Allen) came there and said: “Charlie, we need you to come and play football.” And my wife said: “No he's not playing football.” And he said: “C'mon Charlie you have to help us out?” And I went there and I played about eight years.

**OH:** With the Raggies?

**CD:** And we used to go ... wherever we would go ... back in an open truck ... went through a lot of bloody way.

**OH:** Why were they called the Raggies?

**CD:** Well they told me – I wasn't there – early in the piece they had no guernseys. They got potato bags and they cut them into – that's why they call them the Raggies. That's what they told me – I don't know.

**OH:** You didn't have to wear potato bags when you played?

**CD:** No, never got that far.

**OH:** And so you said you've got two daughters. When were they born?

**CD:** Well, one was born in the old house there (in White's Lane), 1946 and the other one she was born in the hospital and my wife had a haemorrhage and Lina was taken out with instruments. She lost all her blood, my wife and she nearly – and Lina was seven weeks in the hospital – she never came home. They pulled her out with ... instruments. What do you call that? On the back there were no hair there – I tell you what luck to get Lina. She is a beautiful girl and then Robert, my grandson he went down with croup and he was going to die. And lucky that eventually they ... he was in the Modbury Hospital there and they used to give him injections and put him out and used to put this thing down his throat.

**OH:** He had croup, was it croup?

**CD:** Oh terrible, you know. He was lucky to live because Lina had a room there to stay there and they told – just about a night before he came good – he said to my late daughter – he said you had better get prepared for the worst – I don't think he will make the morning and bugger me dead, next morning we go there it was a miracle – we went there the next morning and the doctor said we've got some good news – he's getting white cells turn up and I said how many white cells there? 600 or something but he said: "You've got another thing." He said: "Your little grandson and son recognise you when we take him out? It's all right, if he doesn't recognise you he's a vegetable." It's terrible, and I was doing stuff in the garden and I wouldn't do nothing while my grandson was dying away. It was bloody terrible. It hasn't been all fun.

**OH:** You've had a hard life I would say.

**CD:** And Lina, after I sold the unit there I gave the whole lot – half each to Dorena and then ... 90 over \$1,000 each and Lina went away for six weeks – she came back – she goes to the dentist and her dentist said you haven't got toothache – it's something else. And poor old daughter she had all the side – what do you call? So they operated there and they took some stuff out of the legs and put it there and she gradually started – and then the cancer spread and then they took her to the Mary Potter place and that was the end of Lina.

**OH:** Well how many grandchildren do you have?

**CD:** Four.

**OH:** Four, and any great grandchildren?

**CD:** Three.

**OH:** Three great grandchildren, that's a wonderful record. That's beautiful.

**CD:** And I'm still here.

**OH:** Yeah.

**CD:** And I have seen my great grandchildren grow up. One is about 19 and the girl is 19 – that’s Lina’s there – and the boy is about 17 and I have been blessed that I am still here and I still ... what do you call it? Help them when I can.

**OH:** Absolutely, that’s beautiful – and then you’ve got Dorena with two girls too? – So, and they’ve got – so you’ve got beautiful grandchildren around you, that’s lovely.

**CD:** Oh yeah the kids are all good. I don’t get on with Dorena but she listens to most of the bloody crap.

**OH:** Now tell me your sister has just passed away – your sister – you were very close to your sister Pellegrina?

**CD:** Yeah we’ve always got on – she was so good to me you know. Every time what do you call? Charlie come up and have dinner with them ... she will drop everything and cook dinner. After my wife passed away I still wanted to try and do a bit of garden. She used to come and she used to come down there and help me with the hoe ... I grew rockmelons and I grew onions but that time the rockmelons they were coming from Port Pirie and all those places. You couldn’t sell them.

**OH:** So you gave it away then? Is that when?

**CD:** I gave it away. I grew tomatoes, 2,000 plants ... I grew them to make puree. One morning I picked 24 crates – the big crates and – big crates. One of the crates broke and I got a bloody hernia out of it. So anyhow after all that time with this hernia I eventually went and had it done. I finished up I got a bloody cough, an infection. I was 16 days in the hospital with what do you call this? – And this bloody doctor, he was a bloody butcher. What he did – after all this happened when he said to me: “Do you want to go home?” And I said: “Dr Raptis how can I go home?” He said: “Have you got somebody to look after you?” I said: “No.” I said: “I’ve got a what’s a name – my two girls working and I said I am on my own.” So he said: “Oh, you want to stay a few more days.” After a few days I had this Mary who used to come and see me, the English ... she had my car and she used to come and see me every day. You know, anyway one of the nurses came out and said: “Dr Raptis wants to see you”. And I went there and you wouldn’t believe it but I have never seen a bloody butcher. He said: “Get on the bed and put your hands behind you like that.” He got the scissors from the nurse there and just went like that. And it would take a whole clot of blood there and all that and then after I was 16 days there was an African half-caste nurse. He said: “Charlie, don’t let that bloody butcher touch you – you’ve got to do it the proper way”.

So Dr Barilla was in ... Tony Barilla was mixed up there ... he took me up top. He stitched me up with clamps or something there. I don’t know what do you call them? And this nurse said to Dr Raptis – he said, “Doctor you should put the thing that draws the blood.” He put plastic there so my stitches don’t fall off. After what you call it? About another two-three mornings, he said to the nurse I am having a shower, he said: “Dr Raptis said you can go home if ...” I wasn’t bleeding or nothing, I arrive home there, then I go to bed at night and

Mary came and looked after me – this English what do you call it? I went in there and had a shower in the morning and I came out in the kitchen and Mary said: “Did you have a shower Charlie?” I said: “Yeah”, and bugger me dead I smelled like a dead horse. Took the ... on the side there.

**OH:** All infection was coming out.?

**CD:** And then I got the nurses they used to come every morning and medication. After that I had the prostate done, after that I had another little operation.

**OH:** So you decided to give up market gardening?

**CD:** Well I ...

**OH:** So you've been through quite a bit?

**CD:** I was bloody sick you know but people didn't believe me. They thought it was all fun, it wasn't all fun.

**OH:** Well, you know your own body – you know, you are here to tell us.

**CD:** But you've got no idea... and my jealousy was on – how much jealousy – just because have I got a girlfriend? Oh she was in for money and all that – none of them used me for money.

**OH:** No well your wife died in 1984 didn't she?

**CD:** About 34 years ago.

**OH:** 34 years ago, so you had given up market gardening?

**CD:** After that-

**OH:** After that?

**CD:** I tried to garden after but it was no use ...

**OH:** So have you done travelling or anything after that? Travelled?

**CD:** I started to travel – after ... come there and there's ... about a dozen people there and I went there and then after that I went away with them. And the first time I went away we went to Mount Gambier and you know I have never travelled in my life. I nearly took the house with me. I didn't have many clothes and went around to Mount Gambier and it was that bloody cold there – with a ... (inaudible) and a cardigan that's all – it was bloody cold there.



**OH:** That's Mount Gambier isn't it? Well is there anything else that you would like to add about your experiences or about your time living and working on the market garden or anything else you would like to say?

**CD:** Well, I could have got a job as a land agent – it wasn't my cup of tea. I was offered a job at the Botanic Gardens and it wasn't my cup of tea. I was offered a job if I wanted to drive a bus when the bus mob – because one of the blokes that was in the Army with me was one of the big chiefs down at the bus thing down at Hackney.

**OH:** Oh bus depot?

**CD:** He said: "Charlie why don't you come and drive a bus?" I said: "No." I didn't want to drive a bus. But he said: "Look, a lot of Italians can't even speak – they drive buses because at that time they had a bloke that used to collect money and everything – all you do is drive – and it takes you about two-three weeks and they show you where to go you know." It would be no problem, all that but I didn't want to drive buses. Then Mr Paton, the manager there, he wanted to buy me an apple orchard.

**OH:** Lenswood, you said before.

**CD:** Lenswood there, and the trouble is that time they had horses in there and I said to ... and my late wife didn't like the hills. She wouldn't go there and then I said to her: "The first of all we have to be two years before we get any apples." And the first year we had to grow and the following year, you might get some fruit, and then you had to spray and all that. It wasn't easy but he was going to give me so much a week but my late wife didn't want to move but I wanted to get away from the market garden. I went to Lyndoch, I nearly bought a place there, 80 acres there, there was 40 acres of vineyards and 40 acres of thing there. I could have made a fortune. 40 acres of rockmelons I would pay off in one year. And it never happened.

And then we went to see another place in Mount Compass and there was a dairy place, it was quite good but the wife said: "How can you take on that – you've got to go every morning 4 o'clock?" You had to get the milk ready and you had to put it on the road and someone would pick it up. He said: "If something happened to you who is going to milk your bloody cows?" and that never happened. And then we went to see another place at Lyndoch – not Lyndoch, Meadows.

**OH:** Yeah Meadows.

**CD:** And there was 80 acres of land there and this one, she had some cows and that, and I said to her: "Look I don't want the cows – I will just take the land." And she wouldn't come at it but I did want to move.

**OH:** But it didn't happen – that's all right.

**CD:** A lot of the market gardeners they had sold their property – they got nothing – they sold it to a bloke called Reid Murray – they were bloody crooks – they put acres right up to ... Smithfield – a lot of the poor buggers never got paid. And another one there Markwick – they had five acres of land on what do you call it – on St Bernards Road there.

**OH:** Yeah Markwick..

**CD:** They sold it to Reid Murray – they gave 20 cents to the dollar.

**OH:** For the land?

**CD:** They had to go and get a job and ...-

**OH:** 20 cents to the acre you mean?

**CD:** And lost five acres of land.

**OH:** What were they growing on the land though – what was on there?

**CD:** They used to grow – what you call it - carrots and cabbage?

**OH:** And they sold the land?

**CD:** They sold the Reid Murray and the Reid Murray never paid. The lady that used to – Mrs Crook – the one I used to go and get my chickens from – she was a millionaire – I didn't know she was that rich.

**OH:** The one at Gawler – was it Gawler?

**CD:** Yeah the one at Gawler – I used to go and get the chicken manure from her. She lost 20,000 pounds within but when she died she left one million to what do you call it – Williamstown retirement place.

**OH:** Oh lovely.

**CD:** She left one million there.

**OH:** That was her legacy.

**CD:** And I don't know where the other four million went. And yet she was so mean – I never met someone so mean. When I first went there to ask for manure I went there and she said: "No, no I've got an Italian bloke that takes it." Anyhow after a while I was going away and I said thanks very much – that's at Gawler there?

**OH:** Yeah.

**CD:** After a while – she was a little skinny woman and she would tap me on the shoulder and she says: “I like you”. I said: “All right – if you like me, it’s all right.” She said: “I am going to help you.” She said: “I’ve got a little bit of manure out there.” About as big as this table here. And I said: “Mrs Crook, I will give you two pound for it – let me throw with a shovel on the thing.” “Oh no. no.” She said: You have to put it in the bags because I don’t overcharge you.” So anyway I had to put this bloody stuff in the bags. She said: “Anyhow, I will take your number your telephone number and see what happens.” But the other bloke was paying less, she put the price up. She rings me up and said: “If you want the manure we will give it to you.” Her husband used to fill up the bags, all I go there and pay two shillings a bag, I would get 30-40 bags. Oh I told you I’m nuts....

**OH:** Okay, thank you for the lovely stories and just lastly before I finish this interview, how do you spend your time now? What activities do you do? How do you spend your day?

**CD:** I have been away, a lot of time, I have been everywhere. I been to New Zealand; I’ve been to Queensland, Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra.

**OH:** So you like to travel?

**CD:** I travel with the English – there and then after that she – the English girl she wanted me to sell and go away and I didn’t want to do. Otherwise if she had stayed I would have stayed with her. She was a very good-looking woman and very clever too. She could drive and everything but then Dorina and that, they hated her.

**OH:** Well, you’ve got to try and please your family sometimes don’t you? Now you have still got chickens and that at home haven’t you? How many chickens do you have?

**CD:** I’ve got 11.

**OH:** 11 chickens.

**CD:** But I’ve got ... I had quails, I had pigeons, I had what do call it..ducks, sheep.

**OH:** Everything?

**CD:** I bought two sheep and a ram – ducks – rats – I just to grow rats – heaps of them.

**OH:** That’s what it’s like on the garden isn’t it?

**CD:** And then my next-door neighbour I went with him a lot. He used to go and help this family of Karen Jones’ Mum and Dad. She used to be on Channel 2, a lovely lady, now and again she would go and see Cyril there. She would come and see me too. Lovely, and she adopted three Indian kids, they are grown up now. She brought them up. And the parents

had about 30 acres up somewhere there, and they had horses there and then they sold them and they both passed away. They were lovely people and her mother was Indian and he is Australian, and the brother of Karen Jones is gone over to Germany – over there – he is that clever he used to play the violin. He got into the German-

**OH:** Orchestra?

**CD:** Yeah, and he can speak the language better than the Germans. Not only there, plays the violin, he gets on the radio and then got a station there.

**OH:** Wow that's all from Athelstone from where you lived – they were your neighbours – they were your neighbours were they?

**CD:** Yeah I still get on with my next-door neighbours, we have been 30 years or more. 33 years.

**OH:** Is there anyone else that is still market gardening in your area or what's the? Are like now? It's all houses?

**CD:** Not much gardening.

**OH:** So you get on very well with your neighbours? That's lovely and they have been living there a long time?

**CD:** Yeah well she was a school teacher, they are all right. They are English – they are different to us. If they eat they invite you, that's how they are.

**OH:** Yeah that's lovely. All right well thank you very much Charlie, it's been very interesting. Thank you for very much for telling us your story and we will celebrate the fact that you have given us a wonderful insight into your time.

**CD:** Thanks very much for tea tonight – that was lovely.

**OH:** Thank you so much.