ALBANY ORAL HISTORY PROGRAMME

Catalogue
Oral History Interviews

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Albany History Collection, City of Albany
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Mrs Jean Ashe

From: 1913 to 1993
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: May 1993

In this interview Mrs Jean Ashe talks about:

School Teaching in WA over 30 years;
Setting up of Meals on Wheels;
Families in Albany

Formats Available: 4 tapes (3 Hours 30 Mins)
Synopsis & Transcript held in Albany History Collection

Conditions of Use:
Research: Open
Publication: Written permission of Mrs Ashe required

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Jean Ashe was born Jean Isabel Mathews on the July 7th 1913 in Bunbury. She gained her early education at Northam and Katanning and in 1927 received an Entrance Scholarship to attend Albany High School. Jean passed her Leaving Certificate in 1930.

In July of 1933 Jean was offered a position as a monitor at the Broomehill School where she remained for one year before entering Claremont Teachers' College (mid-year in 1934) for a six-months training course. In 1935 she was appointed to a one-teacher school at Pingrup, followed by a transfer to Rivervale early in 1939. She spent 1940 in a shared classroom at Byford moving on to Queens Park School from 1941 to 1944. Jean resigned her teaching position when she married Lancelot Kitchener Merrifield in April 1944. They returned to Albany to live. In 1946 she resumed teaching as a Supply Teacher and taught at Albany Primary School until she retired from teaching in 1964. After the death of her first husband, Jean married Cyril Ernest Ashe in June 1964.

In this interview Mrs Ashe tells of her lifelong passion for teaching. She discusses both the joys and the difficulties associated with her many and varied teaching experiences during thirty years in the State Schools of Western Australia. Some interesting insights are given into Albany identities of earlier years including the musically talented Hodge family, and fellow teacher Miss Alison Hartman. Mrs Ashe also tells of the contribution of the Merrifield family to the Town with particular mention of her father-in-law Mr R.B. Merrifield. The setting-up of the Meals-on-Wheels facility in Albany is also discussed. Towards the end of the interview Mrs Ashe sets the record straight regarding a distressing episode which arose during the 1950s in which the facts were seriously misrepresented in the local paper “The Albany Advertiser”.

At the time of the interview Mrs Ashe is approaching her eightieth birthday and looks back on her many dedicated years of teaching and the choral work in particular with modest satisfaction. She remains active in Church and Community groups in Albany and is highly esteemed by former pupils and all who know her.
Mr Stan Austin
From: 1915 to 1990
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: November 1990

In this interview Mr Stan Austin talks about:

Life in Albany;
Sailing and Fishing

Formats Available: 7 tapes (7 Hours)
Synopsis & Transcript (in progress)

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Stan Austin was born on the 19th March 1915, the second child of Lionel and Olga Austin. Stan was educated at State Schools in Albany. He left school at the age of 16 and worked at R. Bell & Co. for the next five years. Following an Eastern States working holiday Stan worked with his father in different jobs, including boat building, mechanics and carpentry. Stan married Marie Jackson of Fremantle in 1946. They have three daughters.

In this interview Stan speaks about his childhood in Albany, his school life including his friends, teachers and some interesting antics including a surprise visit from an elephant and an escaped lion! He remembers his war years in Albany and the effect on the family’s business interests. He details his working life which has included taking supplies to Eclipse Island lighthouse, towing whales for the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company and installing petrol bowsers in the Great Southern. Stan also discusses the changing townscapes, including shops, industry, foreshore development and erosion at Emu Point.

From 1974 to 1976 Stan held an honorary position of supervising building of the replica of “Amity” to be ready for the 1986 Boxing Day sesquicentenary of Albany. Many Albany people were involved including carpenters and blacksmiths. In the interview Stan discusses his role as shipwright, difficulties encountered when developing plans, obtaining money and handling materials.

Since retiring in 1982, Stan’s lifestyle has changed. Keenly interested in sailing, Stan has written a book on the Princess Royal Sailing Club which outlines 75 years of sailing in Albany which was published in 1984. At the time of the interview, Stan still enjoys racing his yacht “Kestrel", and spending time with his family.
Mrs Pela Behrendt
From: 1924 to 1996
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: April 1996

In this interview Mrs Pela Behrendt talks about:

Migrant Experiences (Polish);
Hardship of Early Years in WA;
Resourcefulness and Determination

Formats Available: 3 tapes (3 Hours)
Synopsis
Conditions of Use: Open
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Pela Behrendt was born Pelagia Malkus in Poland in 1924. She left her homeland in February 1941 to work in the Agfa silk factory at Wolfen in Germany. At the end of the war Pela and a group of friends escaped to the English sector of occupied Germany. She was married to Jerzy Behrendt at Osnabruck in December 1945, and their daughter Anita was born there two years later. In 1949 the family took the opportunity to emigrate to Australia and, after sailing from Italy, arrived at Fremantle in January 1950.

The Behrendt family lived at the Northam Migrant Camp for nine months then moved to the railway siding at Ewlymartup, east of Katanning where Jerzy worked on the railways. After transferring to Elleker in the spring of 1951 they purchased 6 acres of land in Ulster Road, Albany, and moved there to live. Their son Harold was born in Albany in March 1951. Pela took a job at the Albany Woollen Mills in 1955 and the couple saved to buy building materials for a brick home which was completed in 1961. Pela stayed on at the mill until her husband's retirement from Millar's timber company in 1979.

In this interview Pela describes her family's struggle to survive during her young life in Poland. She recounts the hardships of their early years in Western Australia and tells how, with resourcefulness and determination, she and her husband established a very comfortable lifestyle for themselves and their children in Albany.
This is an interview with Mr John Bell, co-founder and then manager of the Whale World Whaling Museum at Frenchman Bay in Albany, Western Australia.

Mr Bell was the pilot of the spotter plane used by the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company in Albany and figured in a dramatic mercy flight when he landed a small seaplane on the open sea in order to transport a badly injured whale chaser captain to hospital. In a very difficult cross-wind takeoff, along an 8 foot swell, the aircraft was severely damaged but Mr Bell successfully delivered his patient to Albany, a remarkable piece of airmanship.

Prior to joining the whaling company, Mr Bell flew for the rock lobster industry on the west coast; and although not mentioned in this tape, he was employed for some time by the Geraldton Fishermen's Co-Op in servicing the Abrolhos Island fishery.

At the time of this interview Mr Bell was engaged in an aerial assessment of the increasing numbers of Humpback and Southern Right whales along the western and southern coasts. Among his museum activities, he is working on the restoration of a Catalina flying boat for a static display at Whale World.

John Bell lost his life when his plane crashed, on 13 March 1996, while engaged in coastal surveillance near Albany for the Federal Police and Customs Department.

The interview forms a part of the Australia Fishing Industry Project undertaken by Murdoch University for the Australian Fishing Industry Research and Development Committee.
Mr John Bell
From: 1935 to 1995
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: April 1995

In this interview Mr John Bell talks about:

Coastal Aviation;
Whaling Industry

Formats Available: 2 tapes (140 Mins)
Transcript Held in Albany History Collection
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John Bell was born on 4 December 1935 at Armadale, Western Australia. He was educated at Christian Brothers College and Perth Boys High School.

In 1951, John enlisted with the Royal Australian Air Force and undertook an engineering apprenticeship. Training at Wagga, New South Wales, and also at Laverton and East Sale in Victoria, he qualified as an armament fitter. As he was ineligible to enter pilot training with the RAAF, he learnt to fly privately during this time and gained a commercial pilot's licence.

John left the air force in the late 1950s and took on crop spraying and coastal charter work with a WA company for two years. He was then offered the job of whale spotting for the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company at Albany, in April 1961. John worked in this capacity for approximately ten years. He returned to the company in 1973 to work as a casual pilot, and at the same time, set up the original Whaling Museum at the Whaling Station at Frenchman Bay. John continued as a spotter until the closure of whaling operations in Albany, in 1978.

In this interview John discusses many aspects of his extensive experience in whale spotting for the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company, both for humpback and sperm whales. He discusses the various aircraft used throughout the years, with mention of the pilots who were employed by the company.

John gives an account of some of the sea rescues in which he was involved, including the daring sea landing and take-off to assist the seriously injured chaser skipper, Ches Stubbs, in 1965. John comments on conservation issues and the events surrounding the closure of the company's whaling operations at Albany. The interview touches on the aerial whale survey work which has been regularly conducted for various authorities. John also discusses his part in establishing and managing the Whaleworld Museum at the old Whaling Station.

Less than a year after recording this interview, John Bell lost his life when his plane crashed, on 13 March 1996, while engaged in coastal surveillance near Albany for the Federal Police and Customs Department.
Mr Ron Birss
From: 1949 to 1995
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: April 1995

In this interview Mr Ron Birss talks about:

**Whaling from 1949;**  
**Establishing Cheynes Beach Whaling Company**

Formats Available: 1 tape (35 mins)  
Index & Transcript held in Albany History Collection

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Robert Ronald Birss was born in Albany, Western Australia on 12th May 1921. At the age of fourteen he went into net fishing with his father, with the emphasis changing to salmon fishing after the Second World War. His father George Robert Birss considered the possibility of whaling prior to the war, and in the late 1940s the Birss family, together with their relatives the Westerbergs, pooled their capital and formed the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company in 1949.

Ron worked at Frenchman Bay during all stages of the site preparation and establishing of the company's factory plant, and he moved there to live at the station in 1952. With the commencement of whaling operations in June of that year he worked on the separator under the Norwegian industrial chemist Chris Bollerod, from whom he gained the skills and knowledge necessary for the all-important process of "polishing" the oil. He continued in this field for ten years seeing the company's gradual move from humpback to sperm whaling. Ron became foreman at the station in the mid 1950s, acting as manager when required. He lived with his wife and family at the station until 1962 when he returned to salmon fishing.

Ron maintained his interest in the company of which he remained a shareholder. His father continued as a director of the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company until his death in 1978. Ron and his wife now live in retirement at Emu Point, Albany.
Lt Col John Chappell MBE JP

From: 1898 to 1990
Interviewer: Wendy Mahoney
Recorded: August 1990

In this interview Col John Chappell talks about:

**Albany Defences World War II; The Forts**

**Formats Available:** 2 tapes (2 hours)

**Synopsis**

**Conditions of Use:** Open

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John Chappell was born in Scotland in 1898 and immigrated to Australia with his family in 1912. He spent his early years in Australia as a senior Army cadet and also worked with the law firm Haynes Robinson Cox until 1917 when he joined the AIF. He spent 18 months with the 11th Battalion in France and 3 Brigade. HQ, 1 Division, in Belgium serving under General Sir Talbot Hobbs. After returning to Australia as corporal, he rejoined Haynes Robinson Cox and then worked with Nicholson & Hensman, another law firm for five years. He then became secretary of the Master Plumbers' Association.

Captain Chappell was a founding member of the 16 Battalion Cameron Highlanders in 1936 and was commander of A Company when it was called up for full time duty after declaration of war. He also raised and trained the Press Unit RSL Home Guard from 1940 - 1942 bringing their strength up from an initial 50 to 200 members.

In 1942 Captain Chappell was seconded to the Fremantle Covering Forces and after organising the defence of Bunbury and Geraldton was promoted to the rank of Major and appointed Fortress Commander of the Albany Fortress, responsible for the whole of the Albany Sector which included Princess Royal Battery, various anti-aircraft defences and the coast watching elements extending as far east as Hopetoun, west as far as Denmark, down Albany Highway to Williams and east to Narembeen. He was also responsible for various VDC units at Katanning, Gnowangerup, Mt Barker and Denmark.

After two years as the last Fortress Commander, John Chappell, now Lieutenant Colonel, brought the military involvement at the Forts to a close in December 1944. He then left the Army to become Assistant State Secretary and then Secretary of the RSL. Colonel Chappell's involvement in peace time organisations are far too numerous to detail but they do include Treasurer and Vice President of Legacy, Patron of the Justices Association, Caledonian Pipe Band and of 16 Battalion who have recently instituted the Lt Col John Chappell Trophy. He was also secretary of numerous subsidiary branches of the RSL and is a member of many Lodges.

This outstanding gentleman is a widower with four sons and at the age of 92 is still actively involved in many organisations when he is not tending to his garden in the West Perth home where he has lived for over 50 years.
Mr & Mrs Syd & Jessie Coyne  
From: 1916 to 1992  
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules  
Recorded: November 1992

In this interview Mr & Mrs Syd & Jessie Coyne talk about:

- Noongar Community and Family Life;
- Gnowangerup & Albany;
- Moore River Mission.

Formats Available: 3 tapes (2.5 Hours)  
Synopsis & Transcript (in Progress)

Conditions of Use: Research, Open  
Publication – Written permission of Mr and Mrs Coyne required

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Sydney Coyne was born at South Borden on November 12, 1916, the eldest of eleven children. His father Ned worked on farms in the area and was accompanied by his wife Marianne and children until in the mid-1920s, the family went to live at the Aboriginal Mission in Gnowangerup. Syd received a basic education at the mission school and later at the Katanning State School. His early working life was spent with his father and from seventeen years of age, he worked for farmers in the Borden, Ongerup & Jerramungup districts.

In 1936-37 Syd and his father travelled to the Moore River Mission to receive treatment for eye problems and it was there that he met Jessie Fennel. Syd and Jessie were married on August 2, 1937 at Gingin. The young couple were obliged to work at Port Hedland for a year after which they returned to the Gnowangerup district where they spent the war years.

In the early 1950s they moved to Albany where Syd obtained a job with the Main Roads Department and he later worked in a variety of occupations in the town. In the interview Mr Coyne discusses his childhood in the Gnowangerup District. He tells of the hardships and prejudices experienced by the aborigines of that generation together with his thoughts and reasons for letting go of the Noongar culture as a young person.

Mrs Coyne was born Jessie Fennel on January 10, 1918 at Carnarvon. At a very young age she was removed from her family and taken to the Moore River Mission where she was raised. As a teenager she worked in domestic jobs near Perth. Mrs. Coyne discusses her life at the mission giving insight into the distress she suffered as a result of the separation from her family. She gives an interesting account of the family’s life in Albany since the 1950s. She tells of housing difficulties and the changing attitudes towards aborigines with particular mention of the experiences of her children at the local schools. Mr. and Mrs. Coyne raised their six children in Albany and all now play an active role in the community.
Mr Gordon Cruickshank
From: 1925 to 1978
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: March 1995

In this interview Mr Gordon Cruickshank talks about:

Cheynes Beach Whaling Co. to 1978;
Whale Chasers;
Deckhand, Mate and Skipper

Formats Available: 3 tapes (2 Hours 45 Mins)
Transcript held in Albany History Collection

Conditions of Use:
Research: Open
Publication - written permission of Gordon Cruickshank required

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Andrew Gordon Cruickshank was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, on the 8th October, 1925 to a seafaring family. He worked on casual jobs in Aberdeen then joined the Royal Navy in 1942 at the age of seventeen and trained as a gunner on landing craft. Mr Cruickshank took part in the transportation of American troops at the Normandy landings during the Allied invasion of Europe in 1943. He was serving aboard the LCT 1002 (Landing Craft Tank) when it sank in the English Channel on the 5th November 1944, and married soon after during his time on survivor's leave. He was then transferred to Infantry Landing Craft just prior to the Japanese surrender and travelled to the Far East, but was not involved in further action.

After discharge from the navy in October 1946 he worked on Scottish fishing trawlers fishing in Iceland and Faroe, before working with the Anglo-Australian Fisheries venture which was set up by Francis James and Marrs of Fleetwood, Lancashire. Mr Cruickshank came to Australia as a coal trimmer aboard the company's trawler Ben Dearg arriving in Fremantle in September, 1949. Together with the Comillies, they fished in the Great Australian Bight operating out of Albany. He moved up the ranks to the position of mate before the trawling venture folded in the early 1950's.

Obtaining work with the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company Mr Cruickshank joined the crew of the Cheynes as a deckhand during the company's second or third season of whaling. On completion of the necessary qualifications in 1957, he became mate on the Cheynes under skipper Axel Christensen when the company's second chaser Kos VII was purchased.

After a short time ashore, working mainly in the building trade, Mr Cruickshank returned to whaling in the mid 1960's. He gained his Skipper's Ticket in 1968 and was made relieving skipper. In the early 1970's he became permanent skipper of the Cheynes III and remained with the company in this capacity until its closure in 1978. Mr Cruickshank set himself up in commercial fishing which he continued for the remainder of his working life, retiring in 1993.
Mr Denys John (Jack) Davies
From: 1950 to 1952
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: May 1995

In this interview Mr Denys John (Jack) Davies talks about:

Cheynes Beach Whaling Co. 1950-1952;
Establishment of Whaling Station

Formats Available: 1 tape (1 Hour)
Transcript held in Albany History Collection

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Denys John [Jack] Davies was born in Barry, South Wales on 4th February 1913. He went to sea at the age of fifteen and jumped ship in Australia in 1928 at Port Adelaide.

Over the years Jack worked at a countless variety of jobs in both South Australia and Western Australia before settling for a time in Albany where he built his own home. In 1950 Jack Davies became an original shareholder in the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company and worked at the Frenchman Bay site blasting rock in preparation for the setting up of the station. He cut and supplied the karri timber required for the construction work, and stayed on to work at the plant during the company's first year of whaling.

Throughout this time he had considerable involvement with the Norwegian staff who assisted in all aspects of establishing the station and whaling operations for the company. In later years Mr Davies remained in contact with the whaling fraternity. He now lives in retirement in Albany where he is active as an artist, poet and author.
Patricia Marie Davies (nee Hamlin) was born in Albany Western Australia, in October, 1916. Her parents were Mary Louch and Herbert Hamlin. From the age of seven Patricia was educated at Kobeelya Church of England Girls School in Katanning. At 17 she made her debut at Government House in Perth and was presented to the Duke of Gloucester. Together with her mother she travelled to England in 1935 and remained for the coronation of King George VI in 1936. Patricia married Harold Davies at Paddington in London in 1937 and the couple continued to live in England where they raised a family of four children.

In this interview Mrs Davies gives glimpses of her well known maternal grandparents, Archdeacon Thomas Louch and Mrs Louch with references to their long association with St. John’s Church of England in Albany. She also gives some insight into her mother’s young life including details of her parents’ stylish wartime marriage followed by her father’s early death. She tells of her own childhood and youth and the family’s lifestyle in Albany in the 1920s and 1930s. Mrs Davies discusses her gradual movement away from the church of her upbringing to eventually embrace the faith of the Roman Catholic Church. After being widowed in 1970 she returned to Albany where she continues to live.
Lindsay John Day was born in Albany, on 7 December 1924, to Harold and Dorothy Day. He was educated in Albany and in 1941 became an apprentice baker. He finished his training under his father, who bought the business in 1943. Lindsay married Joan Hutchins in 1946 and raised two daughters and a son.

In 1950, his father sold the bakery and Lindsay worked in the building trade. In 1954, Lindsay built a bakehouse in the newly-developing area of Lockyer, and established the business of Day Brothers Bakers. He was joined in this venture by his brother Warren, and later by his son-in-law and son. The business expanded, eventually taking over all other bakeries in Albany as well as those in Denmark, Walpole and Mount Barker.

In this interview Lindsay talks about his earliest childhood memories of Albany in the 1920s to early 1930s, the impact of the depression and the development of suburbs. He remembers his early teachers, his friends and other notable characters in Albany. Lindsay talks extensively about the bread baking business, the establishment of his business, Day Brothers Bakers, and changes that occurred from his grandfather’s day until 1987 when the business was sold to Tip Top Bakers. In particular he talks about the equipment, its purchase, use and maintenance, the baking process and the ingredients, changing consumer taste, delivery methods and the impact of the Bakers Association on the market.

Lindsay names his grandfather as his greatest influence in his life and lists his greatest achievements as getting married and having a family, learning to fly a plane and starting as an apprentice and becoming the owner of the largest bakery in Albany which gave him a lot of satisfaction.
Mr Albert De Pledge
From: 1906 to 1991
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: August 1991

In this interview Mr Albert De Pledge talks about:

- Kendenup;
- C.J. de Garis;
- Farming

Formats Available: 4 tapes (3 Hours 50 Minutes)
Synopsis
Conditions of Use: Open
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Albert De Pledge was born on 8th April 1906 at Sheffield, England. He attended school until the age of fourteen when his family migrated to Australia and settled at Chelsea near Melbourne early in 1920. His parents then invested in a block of land at the Kendenup Estate development, set up by C.J. de Garis, and the De Pledge family moved to Western Australia in 1921. Albert De Pledge gives a detailed picture of life in the young settlement. He also gives an account of the exodus from the district which resulted from De Garis's financial collapse in 1923.

During 1923 Albert worked for a short time as a butcher in Mt Barker. He then returned to Melbourne where he was given a job by de Garis who by that time had established the Melbourne Subdivision Company. Albert was responsible for the upkeep of de Garis' fleet of cars and after obtaining his driver's licence he became the company's driver. Mr De Pledge gives a first hand account of the events of 1924 which led to C J de Garis' death by suicide in 1925.

For the next four years Albert worked for a smallgoods factory in Melbourne. In June 1928 he married Thelma Foote at Sandringham, Victoria. In 1929 the young couple moved to Kendenup where Albert once again worked on the family property which by this time had been expanded for grazing. The De Pledge's daughter, Loris, was born in 1941.

During 1946 the De Pledge family moved to Albany. In approximately 1948 Mr De Pledge took on a position as supervisor with the War Service Land Settlement Department and worked in this capacity at Pemberton, Mt Manypeaks, Narrikup and South Stirlings until about 1950. He was involved in several other enterprises in and around Albany during the 1950s and 1960s.

Correction: Mr De Pledge later corrected information on the tapes. De Garis of Kendenup went into voluntary liquidation, not bankruptcy as stated.
Mr Fred Edmunds
From: 1950 to 1995
Interviewer: Erica Harvey
Recorded: May to June 1995

In this interview Mr Fred Edmunds talks about:

Point Cloates Whaling Station pre 1939;
Cheynes Beach Whaling Co. 1950's

Formats Available: 4 tapes (3 Hours 20 Mins)
Introduction and index & Transcript held in Albany
History Collection

Conditions of Use: Research: Open
Publication: Written permission of Mr Edmunds
required

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National Library of Australia

This is an interview with Fred Edmunds for the Battye Library Oral History Unit. It forms part of the project on whaling conducted by the National Library of Australia.

Fred Edmunds was born in Adelaide in 1907 and at the age of seven his family migrated to Western Australia. After leaving school he did varied work, including on a sheep station in the Murchison; goldmining in Yalgoo; and in the crayfishing industry in Geraldton. During this time (pre-World War Two) he spent some time working at Point Cloates where he gained experience in the whaling industry. In the early 1950s he joined the Cheynes Beach Whaling Co and moved to Albany with his wife Ruby and their three children. With engineering qualifications he was appointed Works Manager and was involved in the opening of the station at Frenchman Bay in Albany.

During the interview Mr Edmunds talked of the whaling industry in Western Australia and in particular the establishment and operation of the industry in Albany during the 1950s.
Mr Maurice Fong
From: 1936 to 1997
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: November 1997

In this interview Mr Maurice Fong talks about:

Chinese Migration;
Community Life in Albany;
Chinese Restaurants

Formats Available: 5 tapes (5 hours)
Conditions of Use: Open
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Maurice Fong was born in Guan Chum province in Southern China in 1936. He was the third child and only son of a farming family from the ancestral village of Ho Chung. At the age of 10 Maurice was sent to work for relatives in Hong Kong. As a thirteen-year-old he migrated to Australia arriving in Sydney late in 1950.

After three difficult years he found work at a café where he learnt Chinese cooking. He was employed as a cook in a number of restaurants in and around Sydney in the 1950s. At the age of 20 he went into partnership and established a restaurant in the suburb of Eastwood. Maurice married Helena Yea in 1966. The couple sold the restaurant in 1968 and had soon decided to settle in Albany, Western Australia. Within six months they set up the Double Happy Restaurant and this business was sold in 1987. The Fongs undertook the management of the Esplanade Hotel for three years before its sale in 1990. In 1992 they established their next business, the Food Station.

In the interview Maurice relates the colourful events of his childhood and youth in China. He tells of the hardships faced in his early years in Australia and how he gradually made his own way and succeeded in business. Maurice also discusses his involvement in the Albany community over three decades.
Mrs Verna Goodman
From: 1915 to 1996
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: April 1996

In this interview Mrs Verna Goodman talks about:

The Old Farm at Strawberry Hill;
Bird Family;
National Trust

Formats Available: 2 tapes (2 hours)
Synopsis & Transcript held in Albany History Collection

Conditions of Use: Research: Open
Publication: Written permission of Mrs Goodman required

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Verna Goodman was born Ethel Verna Bird, in 1915, at Claremont, W.A. Her father Harold was the second son of Francis and Maude Bird of Albany. Verna grew up in Claremont and attended the Girl’s High School. She enlisted in the WRANS in 1942 and was promoted to Petty Officer in charge of the Transport Office at HMAS Leeuwin in Fremantle. After her discharge in 1946, Verna joined her parents who had retired to Albany.

In 1947, she married Robert Goodman, a returned naval officer and lawyer. They raised a son, Michael, and were both active in a wide variety of community organisations in Albany.

In this interview Mrs Goodman recalls her childhood visits to the Old Farm at Strawberry Hill at Albany in the 1920s with reminiscences of her grandparents and their lifestyle.

The later restoration of the Old Farm under the National Trust is discussed with particular reference to her husband’s contribution to the re-establishment of the grounds and gardens. She also outlines the gradual growth of her husband’s legal practice, Hudson, Henning and Goodman over the years.
Mr Peter Griffiths

From: 1931 to November 2002 and May 2003
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: November 2002 and May 2003

In this interview Mr Peter Griffiths talks about:

- Harbour Master’ Role;
- Major Changes in Port (50 years)

Formats Available: 7 tapes (420 Minutes)
Synopsis & Transcript held in Albany History Collection

Conditions of Use:
Research: Open
Publication: Written permission of Mr Griffiths required

Copyright: The Library Board of WA

Peter Griffiths was born in Geraldton in 1931 to Dorothy (nee Carter) and Hubert Griffiths. He was educated at government schools in Nedlands and Albany, where his father became Harbour Master in 1942.

In 1948 he travelled to the U.K. after being awarded a scholarship at the Merchant Navy Training College at Warsash near Southampton. On completion of the nine months training course he joined Port Line and continued to sail out of the U.K. with this company for the next ten years.

In 1959 Peter returned to Western Australia and took up a position with State Ships in 1960. It was during this time that he met and married Kathryn Wilkinson. He moved through the ranks and gained his first ship as Master in 1967. In 1970 he moved to the Department of Harbour and Lights taking on the position of Relieving Harbourmaster throughout the W.A. ports. 1979 saw Peter take up the permanent position of Harbour Master in Albany where he remained until his retirement in 1991.

In the interview Peter looks back on fifty years of port activity in Albany, from his father’s time during the war years to the last decade of the twentieth century. He discusses the major changes that have occurred at the Port in that time and describes the Harbourmaster’s role, together with his own experiences in the job. Peter and his wife Kathy live in retirement in Albany.
Mr Len Guppy
From: 1966 to 1978
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: April 1995

In this interview Mr Len Guppy talks about:

Cheynes Beach Whaling Co. 1966 – 1978;
Work on Whale Chasers

Formats Available: 1 tape (1 Hour 10 mins)
Introduction and index & Transcript held in Albany
History Collection

Conditions of Use: Open
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Len Guppy was born in 1949 and grew up on his parents' farm at Pemberton, Western Australia. In 1963 his family moved to Albany where Mr. Guppy joined the Sea Cadets. On leaving school he worked at a number of casual jobs and during this time applied to join the navy.

In 1966 he was employed by the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company working as a mess boy aboard the chaser Cheynes II. Finding he enjoyed the shipboard life, he progressed through the ranks as a deckhand and 2nd Officer on this ship.

In 1970 Mr Guppy, together with the crew of the Cheynes II, travelled to Durban, South Africa and brought back to Albany the company's recently purchased chaser which was to become the Cheynes IV. He became the Sonar Officer on this ship in 1972 operating an Aztec sonar. After serving for eleven years under the skipper Axel Christensen, in 1977, at twenty eight years of age, Mr Guppy qualified as Master/Gunner and continued to work for the company as Relieving Skipper aboard the three catchers Cheynes II, III and IV until the closure of operations in 1978.

Len Guppy and his family live in Albany where he is now employed on the tugboat operating at the Albany Port.
Mrs Sheila Hall
From: 1909 to 1991
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: March 1991

In this interview Mrs Sheila Hall talks about:

Social Events;
Albany Society Families;
Father's Dental Practice

Formats Available: 6 tapes (6 Hours)
Synopsis
Conditions of Use: Open
Copyright: Library Board of WA

Sheila Isabel Hall nee Merfield was born in Albany on October 10th 1909 to Thomas Merfield and his wife Mabel nee Egerton-Warburton. Until about the age of eleven Sheila was educated in Albany in a succession of small private schools, (known as Dame Schools) which were patronised by the professional and well-to-do families of the town. She then spent a brief period at the State Primary School and completed five years of secondary education at the Albany High School. After the age of 21 Sheila undertook nursing training in Perth and Melbourne and nursed in Perth during the war years.

In 1942 she married Robert Milner who died during World War II. After the war Sheila and her elder brother Bowen became proprietors of the Katanning Hotel from 1946 to 1948. Sheila then bought and managed a bookshop at Kojonup until 1951 when she married Broomehill farmer Frank Norrish.

In post war years Sheila lived at Katanning, Kojonup and Broomehill and after being widowed for a second time in 1963 she moved to Nedlands, Perth and began a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of WA in 1964 including a year of language studies in Italy in 1967-68. On completion of her degree in 1970 Sheila married a retired engineer, a cousin on her mother's side, John Peel Hall. In 1971 Sheila Hall returned to Albany.

In this interview Mrs Hall describes her privileged childhood as daughter of the local dentist and god-daughter of prominent Albany barrister Mr F R Dymes. She gives fascinating insight into the lifestyle of the social elite of Albany in the 1910s and 20s, where her mother, a popular hostess, participated in all the preferred distractions of the wealthy classes. Mrs Hall includes anecdotes of a number of her mother's friends who were the old and prominent families of to the town. Because of the social standing and circumstances of her family, Sheila Hall's charming and often frank account of the events of her youth is a unique record.

As Mrs Hall suffered indifferent health, the recording was conducted over a three month period. She was uncertain of the dates of some of the events discussed and these could not be readily checked. Mrs Hall corrected some of the information given in the interviews and this can be found at the beginning of SIDE B of TAPE 3.
Sydney Harper was born in Albany 10 November 1917 the only child of Alan and Evelyn Harper. He was educated at the local government schools till the age of 17 when he commenced work with the Albany Advertiser as a junior reporter. After two years in this position he joined his father in his sheoak sawmilling business where he was employed until he suffered back injuries in 1947.

In 1942 Syd Harper married Daphne Neil and they raised a family of four. From 1951 to 1960 he operated his own sheoak sawmilling business in Albany. Then in 1959 he formed a partnership and established the Albany Brick Company of which he was managing director until its sale in 1966. In 1967 Mr Harper joined MLC Life Assurance.

In this interview Mr Harper shares his early memories of Albany, its people, and events. He tells of his lifelong interest and involvement in cycling, including his successes in this sport. Mr Harper gives detailed information regarding all aspects of the sawmilling of sheoak timber in the Albany region, from his father’s time in 1918 until its eventual decline during the 1960s. The sheoak produced by their mills was used exclusively for barrel staves supplying breweries in all states of Australia except Tasmania. Mr Harper remained an active member of the Albany community and despite heart surgery in 1987 he continued to be an enthusiastic recreational cyclist.
Mr James (Paddy) Hart
From: 1965 to 1995
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: April 1995

In this interview Mr James (Paddy) Hart talks about:

Cheynes Beach Whaling Co.;
Whale Chasers From 1965

Formats Available: 3 tapes (3 Hours)
Index and Summary & Transcript Held in Albany
History Collection

Conditions of Use: Research: Open
Publication: Written permission of Mr. Hart required

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National Library of Australia

James Frederick (Paddy) Hart was born on 21st September 1939 in Dublin, Ireland, where he was also educated. He trained and worked as a commis chef, going to sea at fifteen as a ship's cook on cargo tramps. At the age of twenty he gained a chief cook's ticket in the Irish Merchant Navy.

In 1959 he jumped ship at Albany, Western Australia where he worked at a variety of casual jobs, including a brief time as cook on the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company's chaser, the Kos VII, before being apprehended as an illegal immigrant in 1960. Some months later he was granted residency and returned to Albany.

Mr Hart started a job as deckhand on the whaling chaser Cheynes III in 1965, and later took over as cook on this ship. He worked aboard the chasers for the next ten years progressing through the ranks from fireman to mate. During his time as deckhand he played an important role in assisting after the accident in which the skipper Ches Stubbs lost his lower leg.

In 1975 Mr Hart qualified as Master and became a relieving skipper/gunner on the company's three catchers, the final few years of the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company's operations, taking over as permanent skipper of the Cheynes II. While skipper of the Cheynes II, he was involved in a daring rescue off Albany's south coast in March 1978, in which a young man was saved by the heroic actions of the whaler's crew.
Mr Howard Hartman

From: 1902 to 1996
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: October 1994 to February 1996

In this interview Mr Howard Hartman talks about:

Monumental Masonry;
Fishing

Formats Available: 18 tapes (18 Hours)
Transcript held in Albany History Collection

Conditions of Use: Open
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Howard Hartman was born in Albany on 16th October 1902. He attended the State School and won a scholarship to Perth Modern School where he was a student from 1914 to 1918. On completing high school he joined his father John in his monumental masonry business in Albany and learned the trade. Father and son worked together on the building of the town's War Memorial which was unveiled in 1921. Between them they supplied gravestones to much of the South West, with quantities also sent to the goldfields in the early part of the century.

Mr Hartman started commercial fishing between the wars while continuing with the monumental work. In 1933 he married Kathleen McNamara of Albany. He was commissioned to reconstruct the base for the Desert Mounted Corps Memorial on Mt Clarence, Albany in 1960, after its removal from Port Said. Mr Hartman was forced to retire after being badly injured in a quarry fall in the late 1960s, and the monumental business was sold in 1972.

In this wide-ranging interview, Mr Hartman recounts the events of his long and remarkable life. He includes countless fascinating tales of Albany and its people from the beginning of the century through both wars to 1996. He describes his father's skill at his craft of monumental sculpting, and outlines the changes that occurred in this trade during his own working life. He gives a very personal account of the difficulties his family suffered during the wars because of their German ancestry. His lifelong love of boats and the sea is revealed throughout the interview as he describes his boatbuilding, sailing and fishing.
BRENDA VIOLET MAY HOLLAND was born in Perth on August 25th 1900 to Archie Holland and his wife May nee Pugh. During her early childhood the family lived in Perth, Bunbury, Northam, and Geraldton where her father followed his employment as a brewer. When Brenda was 10 years old the family moved to Albany and her father and a partner established the "Holland Long Lion Brewery" on Middleton Road.

Brenda started her schooling in Geraldton and on arriving in Albany attended the local Convent and then the State School, until about 16 years of age. Her artistic talent was apparent during her school years & she later became a student of Henry Van Raalte in Perth. In the mid 1930s she attended art school for 2 years in Melbourne at the Gallery of Victoria. On completion of the course she spent a further year at Sydney Technical College pursuing her interest in portraiture. After returning to Albany in 1939 Brenda Holland set up an art studio in the family home in Aberdeen Street and took on private pupils.

In this interview she recalls experiences from her childhood, including memories of visits to her father's brewery in the pre-World War I years in Albany. She relates memories of school days and events from the war years. Miss Holland describes her family's lifestyle and their various homes in the town. She also discusses her art school years in Melbourne and Sydney and her later years of private art teaching.

Miss Holland recalls some of the interesting personalities of Albany in the early decades of the century, with particular mention of the several aboriginal identities who sat for her, these portraits having now been donated to the Albany Historical Society.
Mr John Holmes
From: 1910 to 1991
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: January 1991

In this interview Mr John Holmes talks about:

Retailing;
Forts;
Cricket

Formats Available: 5 tapes (5 hours.)
Synopsis
Conditions of Use: Unknown
Copyright: Unknown

John Holmes was born in England in 1910 and migrated to Australia as a child. In this interview John describes his family background in England, his school days in Australia, life on his farm at the Kalgan and cricket, concerts and outings of the day. He also discussed the impact of his father's death when he was 10, and the subsequent change of lifestyle when the family moved to Albany. John married Marjorie Sinclair in 1934.

In this interview, John describes his employment at Drew Robinsons Department store. He talks about various departments and how goods were bought and distributed. He also describes changes in customer service and staffing wages and working conditions and talks about the introduction of decimal currency and the effect of WWII on the store. His description includes his experiences in the Manchester department at Drew Robinsons. This includes the pattern of each day's work, manufacture of curtains and blinds and fitting linoleum. John remembers making curtains for the Light Horse Memorial opening, boarding houses, restaurants and the picture theatre.

In 1940, John entered the 124th Battery of the Australian Garrison Artillery at the Forts. At the time Colonel John Chappell was commander. He also gives a detailed account of the men stationed there including an account of Sergeant Atkinson's wartime wedding. Included is a description of his own role, daily routines and training as well as the equipment used, in particular the gas mask and his role as Gas - Non Commissioned Officer. He also describes inoculations, discipline, harbour security, guns, incidents, going on leave, Americans in Albany and food. The interview includes the closing of the fort and explains the system the government used to return servicemen to work. After the war, John returned to work at Drew Robinson, working in drapery and window dressing. Later he became the merchandising manager.

John was also involved in community affairs in Albany. This includes his position in Albany RSL, and the local Australian Labour Party. He talks about choosing the building sites for the Allambie Park Cemetery, the new hospital and the development of the Lockyer and Spencer Park areas.
Enid Home was born Enid Boyd at Kellerberrin in 1920. In 1942 Enid took up nursing, and trained at Wooroloo, Bunbury and Kalgoorlie hospitals before transferring to Albany. She then undertook midwifery training at St George's Hospital Melbourne and worked at St Margaret's Maternity Hospital in Sydney, before returning to Albany in 1949 where she worked at the local maternity hospital and then at the general hospital.

In 1953 Enid travelled to England to attend the Coronation and worked in private nursing with a London Agency. On returning to Albany in 1954, she took on a position as surgery assistant and receptionist. Late in the 1950s she married Arthur Robinson Home, a local doctor and ex POW. Together they played an active role in community work, in particular with the St John Ambulance Association. After her husband's death, Enid commenced district nursing with the Silver Chain continuing for ten years, followed by seven years as weekend matron in their nursing homes.

Enid devoted her retirement years entirely to working for the people of Albany, rendering many deeds of kindness to those in need. At the time of the interview Enid continues as a tireless volunteer in countless organisations.
Mrs Dorrit Hunt
From: 1904 to 1991
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: May 1991

In this interview Mrs Dorrit Hunt talks about:

- Teaching;
- Historical Research;
- Early Denmark Life

Formats Available: 6 tapes (5.5 hours)
Synopsis
Conditions of Use: Research – Open
Publication: Written permission of Mrs Hunt required
Copyright: Library Board of WA

Ellen Dorrit Berry Hunt (nee Simonds) was born in Essex England on the 9th January 1904, to James Simmonds and his wife Elizabeth (nee Berry). In 1911 the family migrated to Western Australia where Dorrit’s father had purchased land at Denmark.

Dorrit was already an avid reader when she attended school for the first time at 10½ years of age at the newly opened Scotsdale School. She made rapid progress through the school and on completion of the primary grades 3½ years later was awarded a scholarship to the newly formed Albany District High School in 1918. Dorrit boarded in Albany during the five years of her secondary schooling and on the completion of her Leaving Certificate spent a year as a monitor at the Albany Infant School. She then undertook teacher training at Claremont Teachers Collage and in 1925 was appointed to Yallingup Siding. Dorrit spent 18 months at this new one-teacher school before returning to Denmark and Scotsdale School where she continued to teach until her first marriage in 1927. After the breakdown of her marriage, Dorrit returned to Albany in 1933 where she supported herself and her baby daughter.

In 1934 she married Bill Hunt, a carpenter and builder, and subsequently moved to Perth. During the early 1950s the Hunt family returned to Albany to live. Together with raising her family Mrs Hunt became an active member of a number of organisations, including the Fellowship of Writers, the Albany Arts Council and the Albany Historical Society.

In 1958 she took on the role of ‘The Stamp Lady’ on the children’s program of the local radio station 6VA, and joined the staff for approximately five years. In the late 1970s Mrs Hunt played a large part in the writing and editing of a series of four booklets for the Albany Town Council entitled “Albany - First Western Settlement”. Mrs Hunt remained a committed member of several organisations in Albany and continued to pursue her interest in history, creative writing and reading.
Mrs Lucy Kershaw
From: 1905 to 1992
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: June 1992

In this interview Mrs Lucy Kershaw talks about:

Albany, Childhood and Schooling;
Working Life in Tearooms;
Boarding Houses and ‘InService’;
Cake Decorating and Catering

Formats Available: 7 tapes (7 Hours)
Synopsis
Conditions of Use: Open
Copyright: Library Board of WA

Mrs Lucy Kershaw was born Lucy Giblett on 9th August 1905 in Albany. She attended the Albany State School until the age of 14. On leaving school she went into service and worked in several homes in the town. For a time she was apprenticed to a dressmaker until the onset of her mother's illness. Aged only 15 Lucy then cared for her mother until her death in 1922.

Lucy worked in a variety of tearooms and boarding houses around the town, supporting herself over the years. In 1933 she married John Kershaw, a skilled textile worker who was employed at the Albany Woollen Mills from approximately 1929 until his retirement in the mid 1960’s. The Kershaw's son, Nigel was born in 1935.

Lucy continued as an energetic member of numerous community groups, in particular the Wesley Church, the Agricultural Society and the Country Women's Association. In later years she devoted her life to the care of her husband who was blind for approximately 13 years before his death in 1989.

In this interview Lucy Kershaw enthusiastically recalls her childhood in Albany with particular reference to her Middleton Beach Road neighbourhood. She recounts her school days with clarity and gives a vivid description of the activities of the cooking school of the day. She provides a frank account of her working life in the 1920s including her experiences ‘in service’ in a well-to-do household. Mrs Kershaw discusses her many and varied interests throughout her life including music and homecrafts of all types, in particular cake decorating and catering, in which she was involved in both a voluntary and professional capacity.

At the time of this interview Lucy Kershaw (87) lived an active and independent life. She was well known throughout the Albany community for her tireless and cheerful contribution to many organisations in the town.
Mr John Manley
From: 1929 to 2001
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: March 2001

In this interview Mr John Manley talks about:

Motor Industry;
Land Development

Formats Available: 8 tapes (8)
     Introduction only
Conditions of Use: Research – Open
     Publication: Written permission of Mr Manley required
Copyright: Library Board of WA

John Colin Manley was born in Albany in May, 1929 to George and Aenid Manley. After leaving school during the war years, he went to work at his father's garage, Manley Motors, in Frederick Street, Albany. He then launched out into a variety of jobs including carpentry on housing and at the whaling station, as well as bulldozer work. In the 1950s he returned to vehicle mechanics, establishing his own business in David Street. John married Gwenda Tysoe in 1955 and they raised a family of four. In the 1960s he gradually moved into motor wrecking and Albany Wreckers was operated from a site in Collingwood Road and later in Sanford Road. At the same time he developed residential blocks of land in the Collingwood area and over the years built commercial units, for lease, on his land in Minna Street and Sanford Road.

In the late 1970s the Collingwood Heights subdivision was opened up with a syndicate, and in the 1980s and 1990s he developed the residential land at Kalgan Heights.

In this interview John gives a striking account of his youth and Albany in the 1940s and 50s. He gives insight into his father's life and long involvement in the motor industry, with detail on Manley Motors. He discusses his active participation in the Motorcycle Club of earlier years as well as his current involvement with the Vintage Car Club and the Lions Club.

John continues his busy life, having already contributed a great deal to Albany both in business and in a voluntary capacity.
Mr Kenneth John (Jack) Martin and Jim Shanhun
From: 1954 to 1965
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: May 1995

In this interview Mr Kenneth John (Jack) Martin and Jim Shanhun talk about:

Cheynes Beach Whaling Co. 1954 – 1965;
Flensing;
Coal Trimmer

Formats Available: 1 tape (2 Hours)
Index and Introduction & Transcript held in Albany
History Collection

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Kenneth John Martin was born in Footscray, Victoria, on the 24th August, 1924. He enlisted in the RAAF during the Second World War, then worked in Queensland before coming to Western Australia in 1953.

After working on the railways and for Hunts Canning Factory in Albany, Mr Martin joined the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company in 1954. When he started at the whaling station he worked mainly as a coal trimmer, shovelling coal for the boilers, on 12 hour shifts. About two years later when the changeover to fuel oil occurred at the station he moved to flensing.

In 1957 the company contracted out the flensing work and Mr Martin continued to work under this arrangement until he left the job in 1965. He is joined in this interview by Jim Shanhun, his flensing partner for approximately six years, and together they relate the details of their work on the flensing deck during both the humpback and sperm whaling years. They recall many of the colourful characters who worked alongside them and share memories of the pranks and humour of those years.

Mr Martin died in Albany on the 13th February, 1996.
Mr John Morgan
From: to 2003
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: August to November 2003

In this interview Mr John Morgan talks about:

Albany Life

Formats Available: 12 tapes

Conditions of Use: no documentation yet
Copyright: no documentation yet

Needs to be transcribed
Mr Les Mouchemore
From: 1916 to 1999
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: August 1999

In this interview Mr Les Mouchemore talks about:

Fishing Industry;
Community Life

Formats Available: 2 tapes (2 Hours)
Synopsis & Transcript held in Albany History Collection
Conditions of Use: Open
Copyright: Library Board of WA

Les was born in Albany in 1916 to Philip and Jane Mouchemore. He went to the local state schools till the age of 14 and worked at several jobs around the town before joining the family's fishing business. In 1938 he joined the army and soon took up an appointment at Darwin. On the completion of this contract, he enlisted in the AIF and served in New Guinea and Borneo from 1942 to 1945. Les married Ruth Palmer in Sydney in 1942 and they raised 3 daughters.

In 1946 Les brought his wife to Albany where his help was needed in the family's inner harbour fishing business. He also took up working as a lumper. The Mouchemores began fishing for salmon in the 1960s working from Bettys Beach. Les retired from fishing in 1980. After losing his wife he was married in 1981 to Joan Tame of Denmark.

In the interview Les talks of his carefree childhood and early working life in local dairies and at The Mount guesthouse. He gives an outline of the family's long association with fishing in Albany dating from his grandfather's arrival in the town before the turn of the century. Les also speaks of his active involvement with the RSL especially his work tending the commemorative Avenue of Trees.
Alfred Newby was born in Beverley, WA, in July 1914, the youngest child of English migrants. When he was two the family moved to Albany where his father was employed at the Bark Mill. Alf attended the local State school leaving at the age of 13 to work in Barnett’s General Store.

At 14 years of age he began work at the Albany Worsted and Woollen Mills. When he was 17 he was given a position in the dye house at the Mill and thus started his long career in this field. At the age of 42 he became the foreman of the dye house, a position he held until his retirement in 1979. During the 1950s he was State secretary for the Australian Textile Workers Union for a period of three years.

In this interview Mr Newby outlines the major events at the Woollen Mills during his 50 years of employment there. He gives a detailed account of the many processes in the manufacture of worsted and woollen cloth, with particular reference to the dyeing and finishing of the fabrics. He offers his view of the successes and failures of the company over the decades, and discusses the many changes in techniques, products, machinery and management at the mill.

Mr Newby also mentions his extensive involvement in sport in the town, including the pre World War II basketball and baseball teams. He discusses his long involvement as a film projectionist at the local picture theatres from the war years to the drive-in cinemas of the 1960s and 70s.

At 78 years of age Mr Newby looks back on his long years of employment at the Albany Woollen Mills with considerable satisfaction. He was an active member of the Middleton Beach Bowling Club and held the distinction of being one of the longest playing members in the town.
ANDREW RONALD NORMAN was born in Albany on November 2nd 1901, the eldest of four children born to Andrew James Norman and his wife Ruth, nee Tennant.

Ron was educated at the local state School and Perth Modern School where he obtained his Leaving Certificate in 1918. On returning to Albany he worked at Drew Robinsons pharmacy department until 1920 when he was apprenticed to local pharmacist, Mr Ick. On completion of his final exams in 1925 he was employed in the Stirling Terrace Chemist Shop by his former master. On 4th October 1930 Ron married Doris Dawe. In the 1950s Mr Norman took on the proprietorship of the pharmacy which was by then occupying premises in lower York Street. He retired in 1970 bringing to an end a career of 50 years.

In the interview Mr Norman discusses the enormous changes that have occurred in the pharmaceutical field over the years. He includes some very interesting insights into the drugs available and methods of dispensing in the 1920s and 30s. He also mentions the many varied products which pharmacies supplied during these years. Mr Norman relates his and his wife's active involvement in the Albany Wesley Church from childhood to recent years. He discusses their participation in the many groups which have functioned within this church including youth groups, musical, repertory and sporting clubs, with particular reference to the Tennis Club. In later years Mr Norman served on the church's School Hostel Management Committee.

Mr and Mrs Norman continued to share their warm hospitality with all comers at their home, maintaining a long tradition which included providing a home away from home for sailors during World War 2. At the time of the interview Mr Norman was in his 90th year, he retains his thirst for knowledge in spite of failing health, and describes himself as a 'victim' of the drugs he once dispensed to others.
Mr Gordon Norman
From: 1911 to 1991
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: December 1991

In this interview Mr Gordon Norman talks about:

Albany Through Four Generations;
Family Newsagency;
Local Government;
Farming

Formats Available: 16 tapes (16 Hours)
Synopsis & Transcript held in Albany History Collection

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Gordon Norman was born in Albany in 1911, and attended the government schools in the town. He began full time work in his father's newsagency at the age of sixteen. In 1928, his father purchased a farm at King River allowing Gordon to pursue his farming ambitions. The family bought the homestead property at Mt. Manypeaks in 1937 but because of injury Gordon was soon forced to give up farm work and he returned to work in the family shop.

In 1942, he joined the Royal Australian Naval Voluntary Reserves and served in Fremantle, Albany and Geraldton. He was discharged in 1945 having gained the rank of Petty Officer. Gordon Norman married Gwenneth Pierpoint in 1944 and they had two children.

After the war, his preference for life on the land took Gordon and his wife back to the property at Manypeaks but circumstances saw him return to the shop in Albany in 1947. He, his wife and sister continued to conduct the business after their father's retirement, and Norman Bros. Newsagency was finally sold by the family in 1977.

In this interview, Mr. Norman discusses his family's involvement in Albany over four generations, with particular mention of his role in farming and the family newsagency. His detailed and frank account of his work in community affairs has provided an informative insight into many aspects of the development of the Albany locality.
Mr Norman (Nobby) & Mrs Gladys Pannett
From: 1913 to 1990
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: July 1990

In this interview Mr Norman (Nobby) & Mrs Gladys Pannett talk about:

**Eclipse Lighthouse;**
**Waterfront and Shipping Activities in the Port of Albany**
**1920-1940**

**Formats Available:** 4 tapes (4 Hours)
**Synopsis**

**Conditions of Use:** Research: Open
**Publication:** Written permission of Mr Pannett required

**Copyright:** Library Board of WA

Mr Pannett, better known as Nobby, was born in Albany on 16th October 1913, the youngest and only Australian born child of English migrant parents. His family lived above Serpentine Road in what was then Dicks Street where his father set up a carpentry business.

After leaving school at fourteen, Mr Pannett worked for his father. He later worked in a great variety of carpentry-related jobs for various employers, in particular boat-builder Lionel Austin. Over these years he gained many skills associated with boating, building and construction generally.

Mr Pannett has provided information on waterfront and shipping activities in the Port of Albany during the 1920’s, 1930’s and 1940’s including his experiences with the Naval Auxiliary Patrol during the early years of World War II.

In 1938 Nobby Pannett married Gladys Crisp in Gnowangerup. In 1942 he became assistant lighthouse keeper at Eclipse Island, south of Albany. Mr and Mrs Pannett have both shared their experiences of life on the island giving insight into the daily running of the lighthouse and how they dealt with life in general on the island.

During the later war years Mr Pannett worked under the government’s Manpower Scheme for essential trades. A variety jobs followed including the operating of the Town Jetty Tearooms and Mrs Pannett has included her memories of this venture.

In 1946 Mr and Mrs Pannett purchased land at Little Grove on the southern side of Princess Royal Harbour and they became active in the development of this area. They set up a tearoom business and contributed to the social and community life over the years.

Mr and Mrs Pannett raised three children and in later years Nobby Pannett continued with building work around the Albany district. Because of a stroke he suffered eighteen months before the interview Mr Pannett had some difficulty recollecting and expressing his thoughts, as he would have liked.
Douglas Campbell Pope, the second of five children, was born on the 19 November 1916 at Katanning where his father Edward was a doctor. Doug attended the Katanning State School and undertook his secondary education at Guildford Grammar School in Perth. In 1935 he commenced Medical School at Melbourne University, and was a resident of Trinity College until his graduation in 1941. Throughout these years the Pope family holidayed at Middleton Beach in Albany, and Dr. Pope recalls the people, homes, and leisure activities of this time.

On completion of his training he spent a brief period at Perth Hospital, before enlisting in the A.I.F. in June 1942. In 1943 he served with a Field Ambulance in the 2/48th Battalion of the 9th Division in New Guinea, and later as R.M.O. (Regimental Medical Officer) with this unit. During the last months of World War II he served in Borneo, where he was awarded the Military Cross while at Tarakan. On returning to W.A. after the war Dr. Pope undertook a refresher course at Royal Perth Hospital and King Edward Memorial Hospital, before joining his father’s practice in Katanning in 1946.

In 1950 Douglas Pope married Judith Phillips, daughter of a Katanning farmer. By this time his father was suffering poor health and was forced to retire in 1951. For the next ten years Dr Pope experienced the not inconsiderable demands of a country practice on both himself and his family. He describes some of the limitations of medicine at that time and talks of his work amongst the farming population and aborigines of the Katanning district. In 1961 Dr. Pope and family moved to Albany where he established his medical practice. For a period of five years from 1962, he also conducted regular visits to Jerramungup.

Now at the end of his 74th year, Dr. Pope lived in semi-retirement, still conducting a part-time practice. He was actively involved in a number of community and sporting organisations in the town of Albany. As a result of treatment to his throat Dr. Pope has suffered an alteration in the quality of his voice, but is pleased to note that his old canine friend Sky is still in good voice, on side B of the first tape.
Mrs Lois Quadesmith
From: 1896 to 2001
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: May 2001

In this interview Mrs Lois Quadesmith talks about:

Gnowangerup Mission [UAM]

Formats Available: 3 tapes (3 Hours)
Synopsis & Transcript held in Albany History Collection
Conditions of Use: Open
Copyright: The Library Board of WA

Lois Quadesmith is the daughter of Hedley William Wright and Hope May Wright nee Malcolm, who were better known as Brother and Sister Wright. This interview focuses on the work of this couple amongst the Aboriginal people of Gnowangerup and the surrounding districts from the 1920s to the late 1940s.

In the interview Lois briefly discusses her mother's time at the Carrolup settlement near Katanning in the early 1920s. After their marriage in 1926 her parents undertook support work with the Noongar people at the Gnowangerup Government Reserve, situated west of the township.

In the mid 1930s the Wrights purchased land 2 miles east of Gnowangerup and established a Mission in association with the United Aborigines Mission (U.A.M.), where they continued until 1948.

Lois explains her parents’ desire to see the Noongars develop pride in themselves in a generation when they were given few rights in the community. She discusses their philosophy of giving practical help while teaching the aboriginal families Christian principles together with the skills needed to improve their standard of living.

After leaving the Mission Brother and Sister Wright continued to live in Gnowangerup and assisted the Noongar folk for the remainder of their lives.
Mr James (Jim) Shanhun
From: 1956 to 1970
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: May 1995

In this interview Mr James (Jim) Shanhun talks about:

Cheynes Beach Whaling Co. 1956 – 1970;
Flensing

Formats Available: 1 tape (50 Minutes)
Transcript held in Albany History Collection

Conditions of Use: Open
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National Library of Australia

James William Shanhun was born on 8th November 1926 at the Porongurups north of Albany, Western Australia, and grew up there on his family's farming property.

He worked at a variety of jobs including salmon fishing, which led to his obtaining work with the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company in 1956. Initially he worked on the station's top deck as a lemner, cutting up the whale carcasses for the cookers. He then moved to the bottom deck where he learnt the skills required for flensing. In the late 1950s he spent some time working below deck on the decanters before returning to flensing, which the company was then contracting out. Jim continued flensing under the contractor system, remaining on in this job until 1970. He experienced the differences in the flensing of humpback and sperm whales during his time at the whaling station.

This interview was conducted in Albany on 25th May 1995. Jim recorded a further session when he joined his flensing partner Jack Martin in an interview conducted on the following day, 26th May.
Mrs Joyce Shiner
From: to 2002
Interviewer: Ursula Richards
Recorded: June to July 2002

In this interview Mrs Joyce Shiner talks about:

Needs to be Transcribed

Formats Available: 3 Minidiscs (112 minutes)

Conditions of Use: Unknown
Copyright: Unknown

No synopsis or transcript available
Mr Kasimierz Siemiginowski
From: 1923 to 1999
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: May 1999

In this interview Mr Kasimierz Siemiginowski talks about:

**Childhood in Poland;**
**Germany During & After WW11;**
**Optimism in coming to Australia**

Formats Available: 2 tapes (2 Hours)
Transcript held in Albany History Collection

Conditions of Use: Open
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Casey was born at Zagorze, Poland in 1923. At the commencement of World War II he was conscripted for forced labour and was employed on a farm in Bavaria until the Liberation in June of 1945. He then volunteered to work for the American Occupational Forces and remained in Germany.

Casey married Lisa Martern in Munich in May 1950 and the couple emigrated to Australia, arriving in Fremantle on 1st January 1951. They were employed in a variety of jobs for five years, with Casey spending several months at Maralinga.

In 1956 they purchased a cafe in Merredin and ten years later built a new restaurant. A son Ronald was born to the couple in 1960. After the restaurant was sold in 1980, the family bought the Drive-In Cinemas in Albany and Casey and Lisa moved from Merredin. The new Twin Cinemas were built at Orana, Albany in the early 1990s and were later expanded to include a third cinema. In the interview Casey discusses his childhood and the onset of war in Poland. He outlines his experiences in Germany during and after the war and talks of his optimism in coming to Australia.

Casey's indomitable spirit and positive attitude are evident throughout the interview giving insight into the family's remarkable success in business in Albany and Merredin.
**Miss Thelma Steele**  
*From: 1906 to 1990*  
*Interviewer: Yvonne Choules*  
*Recorded: June 1990*

In this interview Miss Thelma Steele talks about:

- Sawmilling;
- Barrel Making;
- Dressmaking

**Formats Available:** 3 tapes (2.5 Hours)  
Synopsis & Transcript held in Albany History Collection  
**Conditions of Use:** Open  
**Copyright:** Library Board of WA

Thelma Steele was born in 1906 at Ballarat in Victoria. Her family moved to Western Australia in 1908 and soon after settled in Albany. Her father, Harry Steele worked as a cooper at the Albany Brewery for approximately 10 years.

Thelma attended the local Primary School for about seven years, leaving at 13½ to help her father in his sawmilling business. She continued to work there for four to five years, learning the various processes required in the production of staves for beer and wine barrels and other timber products. She gave up this work after an accident and then worked briefly in the office of Barnett's General Store. The remainder of her working life was spent at home dressmaking and helping her father in his housebuilding enterprises in the Albany district.

Thelma Steele has provided some insight into the school days of the World War I period in Albany. She has given a detailed account of the businesses which existed in the town of Albany in the 1920s and 1930s. She was also able to provide information on some of the town's people and events of the day. She has given considerable detail on her father’s sawmilling enterprise and later housebuilding business. Miss Steele lived in the home her father built on the corner of St Werburgh’s Lane and Middleton Road, Albany, overlooked by the Dog Rock.

Miss Steele was unsure of the dates and periods of time for some of the events discussed, and these could not be readily checked.
Mr Ches Stubbs

From: 1945 to 1989
Interviewer: Jack Darcey
Recorded: December 1989

In this interview Mr Ches Stubbs talks about:

Whaling Industry

Formats Available: 1 tape (45 Minutes)
Synopsis & Transcript held in Albany History Collection

Conditions of Use: Open
Copyright: Murdoch University
Fishing Industry Research and Development Council

After service in the Australian Army in Borneo during World War 2, Mr Ches Stubbs entered the fishing industry on the south coast. When the Albany Whaling Company started operations he joined the organization and later transferred to the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company, where he became Senior Chaser Captain and Gunner.

He lost a leg in a harpoon gun accident and in an epic piece of aviation history was transported to hospital by the company's spotter plane pilot, John Bell. Mr Stubbs returned to whaling and continued in the industry for ten years until his retirement.

Since retiring he has become a self taught artist of very considerable talent. Indeed, this interview was conducted in the Albany Town Hall where an exhibition of his work was in progress. He has also written a book on whaling.

The interview forms a part of the Australia Fishing Industry Project undertaken by Murdoch University for the Australian Fishing Industry Research and Development Committee.
Mr Fred Swarbrick
From: 1911 to 1989
Interviewer: Jack Darcey
Recorded: December 1989

In this interview Mr Fred Swarbrick talks about:

**Western Australian Fishing Industry**

**Formats Available:**
1 tape (45 Minutes)
Transcript held in Albany History Collection

**Conditions of Use:**
Open

**Copyright:**
Murdoch University
Fishing Industry Research and Development Council

This is an interview with Fred Swarbrick of Emu Point, Albany. Mr Swarbrick has fished in the Albany area of Western Australia for some 65 years. He is widely experienced in many types of fishing at sea, on the beaches and in the harbour and estuaries. He fished with his father in these waters and with his two brothers. His son now fishes in the same area.

Mr Swarbrick is a thoughtful and concerned fisherman who saw many changes in the fisheries in the Albany region. At 78 years of age he still assisted his son in fishing operations.

The interview was conducted in Mr Swarbrick’s home at Emu Point in Albany during a violent electrical and rain storm.

The interview forms a part of the Australia Fishing Industry Project undertaken by Murdoch University for the Australian Fishing Industry Research and Development Committee.
Mr Fred Swarbrick
From: 1911 to 1991
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: May 1991

In this interview Mr Fred Swarbrick talks about:

**Emu Point and Oyster Harbour;**
**Boats, Nets and Methods and Practices of Fishing;**
**Flora and Fauna**

**Formats Available:** 5 tapes (4.5 Hours)
**Synopsis**
**Conditions of Use:** Open
**Copyright:** The Library Board of WA

FREDERICK HODGE SWARBRICK was born on September 21st 1911 to William and Clara Swarbrick. Fred attended the Albany State High School leaving at the age of 15. He then went into fishing in 1926 with his father and brother Alf, and continued in this occupation for his entire working life. Fred married Ivy Rogers in 1936 and they raised a family of four sons and two daughters.

In this interview Mr Swarbrick discusses his family’s long association with Emu Point and Oyster Harbour, including memories of the early residents and anecdotes of his mother’s parents George and Elizabeth Johnson who were the first permanent European residents at Emu Point.

He discusses his family's involvement in the fishing industry of this area for three generations from his father’s time in the early 1900s to the present day.

Mr Swarbrick has included considerable detail of the boats, nets, methods and practices employed by his family over the years. He also gives information on the flora and fauna of the Emu Point area with particular reference to his observations of the bird and marine life of Oyster Harbour and the south coastal region of West Australia over the past seventy or more years. He also tells of his family’s contribution to the establishment of a number of coastal roads in this part of the state.

In his 80th year Mr Swarbrick remained an enthusiastic recreational fisherman and continued to keep a daily diary on weather and ocean conditions in the Albany region.

FOOTNOTE: An interview with Mr Swarbrick was recorded in 1989 for the Murdoch University and is available through the Albany Library. Where possible this interview endeavours not to overlap on the information dealt with in the earlier tape.
Mrs Teunie (Tony) t'Hart (Hart)

From: 1937 to 1995
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: December 1995

In this interview Mrs Teunie (Tony) t'Hart (Hart) talks about:

Migrant Experiences (Dutch)

Formats Available: 2 tapes (1.5 Hours)
Synopsis

Conditions of Use: Open
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Mrs Teunie Hart (t'Hart) was born Teunisje Plug in Ymuiden, Netherlands, on the 22nd December 1937. Her father Jan Plug, a ship's chandler, brought his wife and family of five to Albany, Western Australia in August 1950, migrating together with his mother and twenty other members of their family.

Teunie attended the Albany Primary School, and on leaving school at fourteen she worked part-time and helped at home. After her father established a grocery store on Marbellup Road at Lockyer, Teunie worked there as shop assistant until her marriage to Cor t'Hart in 1961.

In this interview Teunie tells of the misfortunes that depleted her family's finances during their early years in Australia, and of the difficulties and joys that they experienced in adapting to their new country. She gives insight into how her family gradually adjusted to the Australian environment and lifestyle, with particular reference to her elderly grandmother who took everything in her stride.

Teunie pays tribute to her remarkable father and stepmother who through tenacity and enthusiasm, overcame all the setbacks and successfully built a new life for their family. Teunie and her husband Cor continued to live in Albany. They have five children and eight grandchildren.
Mr Kees (Cees) Van Der Gaag
From: 1948 to 2001
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: November 2001

In this interview Mr Cees Van Der Gaag talks about:

Cheynes Beach Whaling Co

Formats Available: 1 tape (61 minutes)

Conditions of Use: Unknown
Copyright: Unknown

Kees Van der Gaag, born 1930, in Rotterdam, Holland talks about his family background; his interest in the sea; education at Nautical College; first placing for job after training; married, children; migrating to Australia; beginning at the whaling company; qualifications not recognised in Australia; resitting exams, for fishing ticket; first job, as a deck hand; describes his day on a chaser as a deckhand; number of ships, involved in a chase; plane spotter's job; number of days chasing whales; whale season; weather guiding the chase; crew on a chaser; comparison of early days to later days; describes the experience of being in the barrel; Grade 1 fishing ticket; learning the skills as he went; the chase of the whale; teamwork between the skipper and mate, communication through hand signals and voice.
Miss Evelyn Weston
From: 1912 to 1996
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: April 1996

In this interview Miss Evelyn Weston talks about:

King River life;
Dairy farm life;
Dept. Agriculture - Albany

Formats Available: 1 tape (1 Hour)
Transcript held in Albany History Collection

Conditions of Use: Research: Open
Publication: Written permission of Miss Weston required

Copyright: Library Board of WA

Evelyn Weston was born at Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, England on the 22nd February 1898. Her family migrated to Australia in 1912 and took up a dairy property at King River near Albany. In the 1920s after working for some years on her parents’ farm, Evelyn was offered a position with the Agricultural Department in Albany and had the distinction of being the first woman herd recorder in the State. This work took her throughout the Albany area as far afield as Denmark and Mount Barker. Some time later she took up a similar position in Victoria working there for several years before returning to the family farm in the mid 1930s.

In this interview Miss Weston relates her work experience discussing dairy cattle breeds and milk production of the day as well as the problems encountered in this industry. She also tells of the hardships of farm life in her youth and the gradual improvements that came over time.

In 1995 Miss Weston was recognised by the Department of Agriculture for her pioneering role as a female field officer with the Department in Albany.

At the time of the interview Miss Weston was 98 years of age and lived by herself on her King River farm, Sherwood. Her severe loss of hearing caused occasional misunderstandings during the interview. As it was necessary for the interviewer to sit close beside her, the sound quality has been affected.
Mrs Ethel (Hilda) White
From: 1919 to 1992
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: October 1992

In this interview Mrs (Hilda) Ethel White talks about:

Hassell Family;
Wartime Experiences;
Hospital

Formats Available: 4 tapes (3.5 Hours)
Synopsis & Transcript held in Albany History Collection

Conditions of Use:
Research: Open
Publication: Written permission of Mrs White required

Copyright: Transcript: Mr P.A. White All rights reserved

Mrs White was born Hilda Ethel Hassell on 4th August, 1919 at Albany, the third child of Harold William and Hilda Hassell (nee Grist). Her early childhood was spent at the family property "Warriup" some 50 miles east of Albany. In 1925/26 Ethel stayed with her grandmother, Mrs AY Hassell, at "Hillside" in Albany and was given private tuition. For the following three years she attended a boarding school in Kalamunda after which she became a pupil at Kobeelya Girls School in Katanning and successfully sat for the Leaving Certificate in 1936. On leaving school Ethel assisted her mother with the many domestic duties required by their busy and isolated farm life.

In 1942 she married Homer White an American naval serviceman from the USS Holland. In 1946 Ethel and her two young children sailed for the United States on the only 'bride ship' to leave from Western Australia. After one year the family returned to Australia and settled in Albany where Mr and Mrs White raised their two sons and two daughters.

From 1958-1981 Mrs White occupied the position of Seamstress and Linen Supervisor at the Albany Hospital. She has played an active role in a number of local community organisations over the years.

In this interview Mrs White shares memories of her grandmother and the household at "Hillside" in the mid 1920s. She describes her pre World War II boarding school years and gives a detailed account of the family's lifestyle at their coastal farm before and during the war, with particular mention of the Aboriginal families who worked on the property. She also discusses the experiences of her early married life including the development of the Lockyer area in Albany. Mrs White and her husband Homer remained very active citizens in the Albany community.
Mr Andreas (Andy) Woonings

From: 1951 to 1979
Interviewer: Yvonne Choules
Recorded: March 1995

In this interview Mr Andreas (Andy) Woonings talks about:

Cheynes Beach Whaling Co. 1951 – 1979

Formats Available: 2 tapes (3 Hours)
Synopsis & Transcript held in Albany History Collection
Conditions of Use: Open
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National Library of Australia

Andy Woodings was born in Kampen, Holland in 1920 and trained as a blacksmith and welder. He joined the Dutch navy at the age of eighteen and served in it during World War II, mainly on the Heemskerck. He came to Australia with this navy in 1942, and was stationed at Fremantle in 1943. In 1948 after discharge in Surabaya, he returned to Australia where he married in 1944.

In 1949 Andy and his wife Mabel moved to Albany where he obtained welding work in a garage. He was offered a job as a welder with the Cheynes Beach Whaling Company in August 1951, and in this capacity manufactured and erected much of the operation plant at the Frenchman Bay site under the direction of Norwegian Chris Bolleröd.

At the commencement of the company’s operations in 1952 Andy was responsible for the cooking and separation process at the whaling station, and was put on permanent staff a few years later. In 1960 he was promoted to plant engineer and works manager. He was involved in observation and plant buying trips to Tangalooma in Queensland and Durban, South Africa. In 1976 he became assistant manager of the station and remained with the company after the closure of the station in December 1978, supervising the dismantling of equipment. He finally left the company in October 1979.