

Remembering Territory families

To Jay Creek and back

Well the police come along. They knew we were there because old Mr Mackey used to go there from Alice Well because there was a police station there. They said, These kids have to go, they'll have to go to school. They're getting a bit too old, you know. They wouldn't learn...

Because that was the order from the Welfare, see, from the town, from Darwin, that was the main branch then; they'd give their orders and the police had to go and do their job and tell you; you had to go into where there was school. Well, this Jay Creek, they had the Bungalow from here, from the town. This Jay Creek they moved it out before the railway came through it because they used to be right alongside the old Stuart Arms there, near the Courthouse there, the old Courthouse...

When we left the station to come to Jay Creek, the old people that we had working on the station, old Grant Shepherd, and old Charlotte and old Ruby, and I think there was old Fannie there too, a few of them that were working there they just cried and cried. It upset us too you know. We were crying too then. They were singing out, "Goodbye, goodbye. I suppose we'll never see you again." Because we'd been with them for so long, more or less grew up with them really...

Well, it was just like, it wasn't even fit for a dog to live in in those days. You know what we used to do? It was just a concrete floor, no beds, one big shed was built there. And a little bit of kitchen on the side there where the girls used to do the baking and that, they had to do baking and all in two stoves they had. One of the stoves, it wasn't good enough to bake bread. One was all right. And this big shed built, and how many tables? There were two tables for the dining room for the boys and two for the girls, for the senior girls and for the younger girls.

Nighttime we used to get no mattress, only blankets to sleep on. We used to put all the stools up and we used to sleep on those concrete floors, two, three girls'll get together. No pillows. We used to just sleep on blankets. To make enough blankets to go around the three of us. We used to, she might have about four blankets, I'll have four, and the other one'll have about four blankets and we used to all put it together so as we could be a bit more comfortable. And that's how we used to sleep. But just rough concrete floors...

When we'd come to this home here, the Telegraph we were shocked to see beds and mattresses. Coming into a mansion after sleeping on concrete floors!

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