

## WANAKA WOMEN PROJECT

Recorded: Tuesday 3, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17th November 2020

Interviewer: Liz Holland

Abstracter: Liz Holland

MARY HELEN LEE

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*The time codes in this abstract summary have been recorded based on the original audio files. Please note that the times may differ for the online audio due to the original files being combined into one file. However, the order of content in this abstract below will match the online audio.*

### First Interview 3 November 2020 File 01

- 1.00 File Identification MARY HELEN LEE [Date removed\*].
- 2.36 Father ARNOLD MATHESON ATLEY [Date removed\*].  
Mother WINIFRED JOYCE nee GRAY [Date removed\*].
- 3.36 Born - Invercargill  
Grandfather built 2-storey house for parents.  
State Houses built nearby. Describes
- 5.12 Sister ,CATHERINE (KATE) JOAN ATLEY (Married surname  
NORMAN) [Date removed\*].
- 5.39 Grandparents – Mother’s parents. A big part in her life.  
EMILY JANE GRAY  
LOCHLAN JOHN GRAY  
Uncle KEN GRAY - introduced photography, tramping skiing to Mary.  
Went to GUNN’S CAMP, Hollyford every Christmas holidays.  
Father’s father WILLIAM ATLEY fixed sewing machines.  
Grandmother – MARGARET (MAGGIE) COOK from GORE region.  
Mary did her grocery shopping.  
ATLEY ROAD in ARTHURS POINT named after Grandparents family,  
had farm there.  
Details.
- 12.26 Responsibilities when young - Mother slipped disc in her back, had  
suspected Tuberculosis and spent a year at WAIPIATA SANATORIUM  
as teenager.  
Able to be “kids”- swimming every morning; “retired” at 15, took up  
Life Saving, teaching children - WAVERLEY SWIM CLUB.  
MAX JONES -Invercargill swim teacher taught Mary, later her  
children.  
Describes.
- 16.53 NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL [Date removed\*].  
WAVERLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL [Date removed\*].

- NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL [Date removed\*].  
 YVONNE PATRICK, best friend Primary School, still good friend - lives Canada.
- JAMES HARGEST HIGH SCHOOL -Secondary School  
 Recalls cooking classes and science laboratory.  
 Liked school. Describes
- 19.44 POLIO era 1950s. Mary contracted Stage 1 Polio. Hospital full - doctor came daily to check her for 2 weeks. Dr ALEX SINCLAIR  
 One month off school – was 7 years old approx.  
 Increased hygiene – compared with COVID-19, 2020.  
 Describes.
- 22.23 No separate Intermediate School in Invercargill. Mary a 4<sup>th</sup> year intake at JAMES HARGEST HIGH SCHOOL for 5 years.  
 Hula Hoop era, recalls and describes  
 Studied French and Latin; Sciences- only 2 girls in Physics Class.  
 MR BULLOCH teacher, textbook by KERSLEY. They learnt it off by heart- did very well in exams. Describes.
- 26.40 Recalls outside school activities: swimming, ORETI BEACH; netball- 9 in team –played Centre, Goal Shoot.  
 Cross Country running – disliked. Tennis - evenings. Biked everywhere.
- 29.42 Holidays - QUEENSTOWN. Father liked sunrise BEN LOMOND.  
 Tramped. Owned one of first cribs - QUEENSTOWN CAMPING GROUND- not much bigger than [Shipping] Container.  
 Grandparent built waterfront house - sold crib, stayed there for holidays. Collected coins from under wharf. Explains
- 32.23 Recalls what influenced her career choice after school, a child with Muscular Dystrophy. Applied for SCHOOL OF PHYSIOTHERAPY.
- 35.08 NEW ZEALAND SCHOOL of PHYSIOTHERAPY [1966]  
 16 Physiotherapy students stayed WAKARI HOSPITAL NURSES HOME first year.  
 Social activities included dances – “bashes”; Orientations.  
 Paid wage each week, no debt.  
 Worked with patients from first year. 60 students in class- family like.  
 Mary interested Cerebral Palsy work.  
 Was in rugby team, JOHN LEE came to watch while recovering from an injury. Wanted her to move to CARDRONA at beginning of 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
 Refused, wanted to complete qualification.  
 2<sup>nd</sup> year flatted LEITH STREET.  
 3<sup>rd</sup> year -Hamilton with ROBYN SLATER, JENNY COLLINS.  
 Worked [WAIKATO HOSPITAL]. MISS GORRICK -tutor she remembers specifically. Military type, learnt a lot.  
 John wrote almost daily. Still has letters. Mainly Aerogrammes. No faxes, emails or texts then.

Graduated DUNEDIN [married John] moved to CARDRONA.  
Describes.

51.15 First impressions CARDRONA. Good kitchen facilities. Cooked -6 men every day-John, Musterers and Farm Workers. Breakfasts, lunches, dinners.  
Ordered food RATTRAYS, DUNEDIN and WANAKA GROCERY STORE  
Had horses, neighbour TRIxie SCURR.  
LILY + JACK MACDOUGALL - [Cardrona] Pub.  
6 things afternoon tea -Lamingtons.  
First baby born; stayed 10-14 days in hospital – other people washed, bathed babies.  
John encouraged her out onto farm. Own horse, Flicker.  
CROWN RANGE closed during winter.  
Describes

**1.00.24 Finish 1<sup>st</sup> interview.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> interview, 10 November 2020 File 02**

0.29 SALLY FRIENDLY, OLWYN PEZARO long-term friends.  
John-university aged 26. Pat [Friendly], John became friends.  
DENNIS + OLWYN PEZARO became friends. PEZAROS stayed weekends. John wanted GP in WANAKA.  
MOUNT CARDRONA split with another title, PEZAROS bought land.  
John -partnership with brothers, until any of them married.  
DR ELMSLIE, recuperating from Tuberculosis ,Wanaka Hotel.  
John lunched frequently with Dr Elmslie - encouraged John to go to university. Studied English, Economics, Political Science.  
Friends taught him think laterally. Mentor Dr JACK SOMERVILLE. He and his wife JANET visited regularly, sons, ANDREW and PHILIP stayed regularly.  
Diverse group of friends so thought “outside the square”.  
Describes

8.43 Graduated 1968. May holidays, John proposed.  
Married February 1969. Wanted to work Cromwell, but released from 2 year bond - DUNSTAN HOSPITAL wouldn't pay the mileage costs.

12.40 Assisted on the farm – “felt like a dog” when mustering- all the instructions given. Had one dog; John milked cow every morning, fed pet lambs.  
John - progressive farmer- from 5,000 to 10,000 sheep and 500 cows. Development, fencing, winter-feeding. Needed 6 men to assist.  
Wool prices crashed [ 1990 ]- John redid budget.  
Organised for the dinners at night after working on the farm.  
Describes.

18.24 Children. RACHAEL [date removed\*] in Queenstown; JOANNA born 3

- years later [date removed\*]. in Cromwell; John would take children out on the farm.  
 SAM born [Date removed\*].  
 Mustering- recalls stories  
 Merino Wool -strong interest of John's. After wool price crashed, John reduced sheep numbers, sold cows, employed less men. Family did the mustering, Mary went home on him one day – the only person to do so.  
 Describes.
- 25.09 Children went to PLAYCENTRE in Wanaka.  
 TIM + KATIE SCURR -children similar ages, shared transporting children. On PLAYCENTRE COMMITTEE with MARY JERRAM. Parents stayed with children. Children went 1 day a week.  
 John wanted enough people living in CARDRONA VALLEY to have school bus that also delivered the mail. MARTIN + KAY CURTIS from UK drove privately funded bus.  
 JOANNA first day pupil -MOUNT ASPIRING COLLEGE.  
 Describes.
- 31.16 Late 1969, bought “KNUCKLE PEAK STATION” [now CARDRONA SKI FIELD] plus block of land down the valley renamed SAWBONES - DENIS PEZARO [to purchase].  
 Developed farm track. Extra farm income put into skifield development. Road built -KEVIN CAPPLE + JOHN YOUNG.  
 Took advice - REINHOLD ZAUNER DOPPELMAYR engineer, 1976; PETER YEOMAN, MT HUTT.  
 Partnership with SALLY + PAT FRIENDLY, briefly H+J SMITHS, JIM + ALISON NELSON.  
 Describes.
- 41.00 DENIS PEZZARO, GP after PETER JERRAM. Later partnered with DAVE ALLEN + ANDREW McLEOD.  
 DENNIS PEZARO provided non-financial assistance.  
 ALISON NELSON + Mary provided first aid at skifield.  
 Describes.
- 44.40 Recalls Birth of SAM and proposed locked gates on CROWN RANGE; QUEENSTOWN/WANAKA towns.  
 Farm work and developed ski area. Helicopter skiing -VALLEY VIEW. 1979, HELICOPTER LINE – Pilots, DON SPARKY, REX DOBY.  
 1980- Rope Tow  
 Described weather conditions.  
 TREBLE CONE developed at same time.  
 RAY LEE- Accountant.  
 Posters –described.  
 1980 Groomer arrived essential to attract returning skiers.  
 Chairlift installed. WARREN COOPER, MP assisted getting approval.  
 Mary -wages, sold ski clothing.  
 1981- Big queues, long drop toilets, muddy road.

Describes

- 56.47 2020 – 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CARDRONA SKIFIELD. Impact of COVID-19. HUGH BERNARD, videographer, BRIDGET [LEGNAVSKY, Cardrona ski field Manager]; SHAUN GILBERTSON; NIGEL KERR and other instructors present.  
REAL JOURNEYS developing field based on John's plan.  
CARDRONA -John's vision to have village; Cross-Country on PISA, Gondolas to both mountains, and SOHO basin.  
1980 VEALLS INVESTMENT bought CARDRONA. Kept farmland. High Court cases.  
REAL JOURNEYS, NZ company – HUTCHINS FAMILY bought CARDRONA [2013].
- 1.05.56 SNOW FARM – developed 1984 [note: noise of aeroplane flying over]. John attached to land on PISA. Hearing 1984 – turned down. BRUCE MASON –anti development on PISA. 1989 finally got permission. Helped by DAVID LANGE [Prime Minister 1984-1989], PETER TAPSELL [Minister of Environment]. HELEN CLARK supportive [Prime Minister 1999 to 2008] – still visits. WHITNEY THURLOW [Ski Patroller] – developed first tracks.  
Seasonal variations.  
SNOW PARK – man-made snow. Had T-Bar, Luge. Part of bigger plan-global recession- Partnership didn't work out. John retired. PROVING GROUND bought area.  
Reflects on current 2020 situation, impact of COVID 19.
- 1. 17.39 Finish 2<sup>nd</sup> Interview**
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Interview 17 November 2020 File 03**
- 0.51 TREBLE CONE [Wanaka ski field , 1968] upset, schools wouldn't attend when CARDRONA started.  
1984-1989 Preparing for SNOW FARM. No snow making facilities. SARAH GORDON assisted in cafeteria. Cross-country skiing new for New Zealanders, developed best way to teach.  
1989 stopped skiing – made advertisements – Land Rover. Cooked for film crews of 60.  
Stories of early days of weather and road conditions. Hadn't planned to be involved – developed lesson plans; waxing procedures; Family became involved.  
Describes.
- 12.55 Car company wanted to test tyres. Special area developed SUMITOMO –branch of DUNLOP; OUTSU; TOYOTA Tyres. TOYOTA Cars by 3<sup>rd</sup> year.  
Supplied lunches.  
1984 PROVING GROUND supported SNOW FARM.  
Sheds built for workshops. Cars tested.  
Name change from NORDIAC SKI AREA to WAIORAU SNOW FARM to

SNOW FARM.

WAIORAU Maori “Many Waters” – Maori used to travel along the top to West Coast.

- 20.20 Attempt to freehold SNOW FARM, PROVING GROUND.  
Balanced nature, sheep. No sheep- increase in HIERACIUM, Wilding Pines, hares, rabbits, possums. Describes.
- 23.29 SNOW FARM, PROVING GROUND developed together. 12 workshops when Lees left.  
Developed SPLIT MU, ice/snow surfaces. Aware of Health + Safety issues. In pioneer days family did everything. Introduction of technology. Brick cell phone. From PARTY LINE TELEPHONE to Fibre. Explains.
- 32.52 Worked with different cultures. Japanese, Korean  
Had MACINTOSH COMPUTER bought from WHITNEY THURLOW in 1980s.  
Koreans’ demanding. Germans. Had meals in Lees house.  
Trips to JAPAN, FINLAND.  
Worked well together. Cultural differences as great as language barriers.  
Explains.
- 39.46 Recalls PROVING GROUND driving mishaps.  
POSSUM BOURNE [New Zealand Champion Rally Car driver] killed [2003] on SNOW FARM road.  
1:1000 cross country ski accidents reported. Reduced fractured wrists. Used Helicopters. Only 2 broken legs, usually shoulders.
- 49.28 2020 COVID 19 adaptations, MERINO MUSTER. WORLDLOPPETT series. PADDY FIELD, ENGLAND supported 4 countries with smaller number as Associates. CHINA, ARGENTINA, NEW ZEALAND, ICELAND.  
Normally 150 Kiwis and 150 Overseas people. Had virtual event due to COVID-19. The only race in 2020. In person race -Face Masks, distancing.  
(Technical Issue)  
Explains.

#### **File 04**

- 0.12 Recalls MERINO MUSTER and food handling to minimise COVID transmission.  
Good things learnt from COVID-19.  
Increased popularity in SNOWSHOEING
- 4.18 Lived on mountain 10 years. Transition from CARDRONA to WANAKABENBRAE CARDRONA.  
Bought WANAKA house by auction. John lunches LAKE BAR daily.

Mary walks; swim lane; paddle boards; mountain bikes;  
KATE [sister, married surname NORMAN] completed RUBY ISLAND  
race.

Involved in secretarial work for MERINO MUSTER committee;  
WORLDLOPPET meeting; VAL BURKE core exercise classes;  
photography, PHOTOSHOP, IPHONE.  
Explains.

16.11 Married 52 years, developed synergy with John's thinking.  
Enjoys PHYSIO Friends; organising events; enjoys people. Cooks meal  
for John nightly. Spend evenings together. Describes.  
To continue story in 10 years time.

21.14 **Finished Interview**

**\*Dates have been removed for online security purposes.**