

Safe in the Hand of God – The Memoirs of Louise Alma Zwar

Table of Contents

	Page
Foreword -----	2
Early Memories -----	3
School Days -----	9
Laura -----	11
Anecdotes from my Teenage Years -----	12
Courting Days -----	14
My Wedding Day -----	17
Married Life and Children -----	19
Droughts, Floods and Storms -----	25
Snakes -----	28
Life at Stonefield -----	29
Life After Stonefield -----	33
Additional Photographs -----	35

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Foreword

Alma Zwar is one of those pioneering women, the backbone of rural Australia, whose lifestyle has all but disappeared from the memories of present day Australians. Because of this, my husband John and I thought it was very important that her memories be recorded for her descendants to read. Thus we encouraged our mother to jot down anecdotes – which she did, on old envelopes, shopping lists and other odd pages as well as writing pads and even a hard cover book. I spent many interesting hours reading through all these reminiscences and collating them in some sort of order.

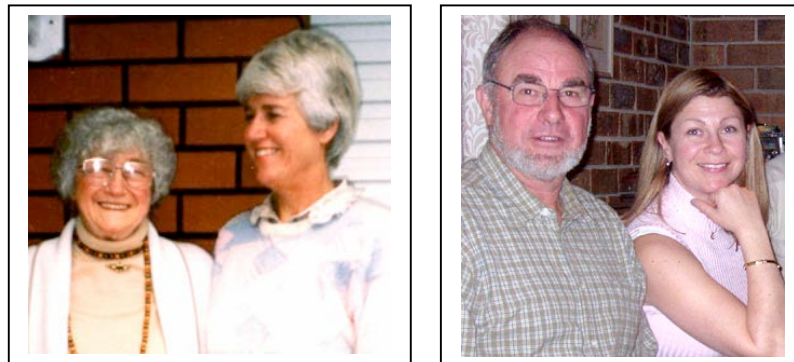
Then came days of interviews when Alma enlarged on these memories and filled in gaps. I found these discussion times utterly fascinating, as her young life with all its joys and sorrows gradually became vividly alive for me. These times with my mother in law were very precious as I discovered facets of her character I had no idea existed, and my respect for her tenacity and fortitude through her many difficulties and privations grew in leaps and bounds.

My daughter Carolyn Hanel (Alma's granddaughter), then compiled my many notes into the orderly form you see here, while John spent many, many hours in front of his computer and scanner organising old photos to supplement and add that essential flavour to the written word.

Memoirs are never completed, and there must be many memories not released from Alma's subconscious that are not included here. She has also skimmed very quickly over "Life after Stonefield" – this can be left to the next generation.

These are Alma's memories, and therefore may be different from what other people remember. But this is her life as she sees it, and we thank her wholeheartedly for her generosity in giving us this glimpse into her past.

Sue Zwar.



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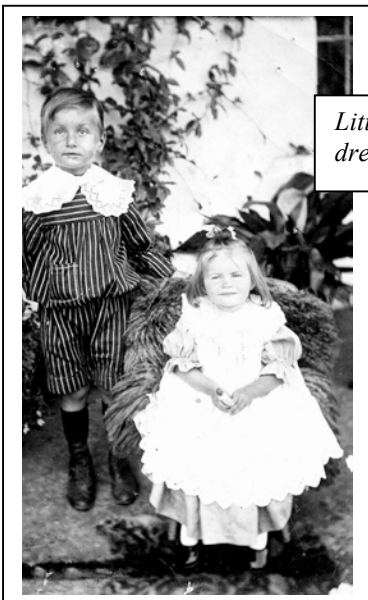
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Early Memories

I was born on 30th September 1908 in my parents' home at Duck Ponds just north of Moculta in the Barossa Valley. Because I was dark haired and brown eyed, I looked more like my father. Everybody said that I was my papa's girl. I was the second child of Heinrich Emil Schliebs and Anna Selma (nee Schulz). My older brother was Richard (born 20-12-1905), and my younger siblings were Gary (29-2-12), Laura (4-4-15), Linda (18-9-19), Ivy (19-3-21) and Leslie (9-6-23) – seven children altogether.

I remember my grandfather being very tall, as was my father, tall and strongly built, but I only vaguely remember my grandmother on dad's side. Mum's mother looked like mum. She died of a heart attack while crossing the River Murray on her way home to Rowlands Flat after visiting her daughter, Mrs. Heinrich Schilling, who lived at Blanchetown. She had been on medication for a heart condition. I never knew my maternal grandfather. Mum's parents were Caroline and Andreas Schulz.

My earliest memory is of an incident that occurred when I was at my Aunt and Uncle, Bertha and Ben Russell's place at Truro. My aunt wanted me to have my photo taken in the dress she gave me for my first birthday. The photographer came very close to me with his large camera on a 4 legged stand and a huge black cloth cover hanging over it. I was sitting all alone in a chair and it all seemed so strange and black to me, so much so that I burst into tears. They all did everything possible to cheer me up, with a little bird on top of the black monster, and eventually the photo was taken and Auntie Bertha's wish was granted. I still love that photo, all these years later, especially as I remember all that was done to get it.



Little Alma in her special dress with big brother Richard



Selma (left) & Aunt Bertha Russell nee Schliebs (right)

Another early memory took place when I was four and my father lifted me up onto a huge fat horse called Sally, dark brown with a light stripe down her nose. My legs stretched as far as they could go, something like sitting astride a table. What a pity there was no camera available then!

Mum's mother loved gardening. They lived at Rowlands Flat where they had fertile soil and spring water on their land. She had the loveliest hands, despite not wearing gloves. Mum's father grew grapes and made his own wine, which he was very fond of drinking. He got cancer in the throat which killed him.

My grandparents, Carl* and Louise Schliebs, came from Germany in 1855 and started here at Duck Ponds where they built a small thatched mud and pug dwelling. As they prospered they built a large stone home with rafters on the ceiling and a strong wooden floor above in the attic to store wheat away from the weather. There was a brick oven to bake bread in and two open fire places. Long pieces of she oak wood had to be chopped in thin three foot long pieces to place in the brick oven to heat it for baking bread. Thirteen loaves could be made at each baking to last a week. {When I was going out with Eddie, his young brother Rudi, who was my age and a real scamp, leapt onto this bakehouse to use it as a seat. Whether this caused the problem or not, I'm not sure, but it sank soon afterwards and wouldn't work properly any more.} The floor in the house was slate grey stone.



*Views of the Schliebs home taken in 2003
Note door to loft*



Because my grandparents only had a small holding at Moculta, they later bought land on the Murray Flats where they built a two roomed mud hut for my grandfather to batch in while he cleared the timber and cropped the land. It would have been very hard work. jz



The two roomed hut in "der Schrub" with the original fireplace & chimney but galvanised iron has replaced the "wattle & daub" walls Photo 2003

*Footnote: J Carl Schliebs was born in 1839 He arrived in Australia in 1855 with his parents on the ship "Peter Godfrey" from Ransen, Wohlauf, Silesia. They settled at Duck Ponds in 1858. Carl married J Louise Krause whose parents arrived in 1856 on the ship "Vesta" from Skampe, Zullichau, Brandenburg. They settled & farmed at Gruenberg. Louise was born in 1844 & died in 1911 & Carl died in 1918. They are buried at Gruenberg

My father inherited the homestead at Duck Ponds and reared his family there. He had to pay out the rest of his family when he took over the farm and he had great difficulty meeting the payments as the small property didn't return enough income. He therefore purchased some extra land across the road from Paul Rosenzweig. The extra debt incurred here was quite stressful for him and took a toll on his health. He did share farming on McBeans Station to earn extra money. He also put in a crop on shares at Craigie's Plains, which they kept sowing after a wet year as the water subsided. It grew wonderfully well, but then all came to nought as the grain was affected by rust or frost and never filled out. My father worked on shares with Bertie Bartsch, and they got on really well together. They camped together and Dad was the cook. Although Craigie's Plains never returned much, it was still better than Stonefield!



*Emil, Selma, Ivy, Alma
& a friend standing in
the maize*



Dick & Emil with their Waggon load of wheat

Dad ploughed the garden to grow maize which would grow 5'-6' high and this was fed to our four cows. He also had vegetables and fruit trees. My father made delicious dilled cucumbers. Of course we grew our own cucumbers and dill. He made them with cherry leaves or vine leaves and white spine cucumbers. He was very particular about the size of the cucumbers. He used a share plough and a horse to turn the grass into the ground. He also added a lot of horse manure which really improved the soil. He had 10 horses in his team to plough the paddocks and he also had a wagon to cart wheat from the Murray Flats to Stockwell.

Once when my father and young brother Leslie were driving the buggy home from the Murray Flats a big truck ran right across the road towards them. My father had no time to get out of its way and the horse and buggy were pushed into the prickly aloes on the offside of the road. *(Those aloes are still growing beside the Sturt Highway east of Truro –ed. note).* The horse broke away and ran home with a broken harness. We got a terrible shock to see the horse with its torn harness and covered in froth. Very fortunately Gary Zwar came out of Schillings' property where he'd been selling lamps and came across the accident soon afterwards. My father was bleeding from a bad cut across the eye, otherwise he was alright. Miraculously my brother, who had been asleep under the seat, was unhurt. Gary took Dad and Leslie into Truro where the local "chemist" stitched up Dad's eyebrow. He then returned them home to us and we couldn't thank Gary enough for his kindness. The man driving the truck was a returned soldier who was drunk.

Before she was married my mother worked at Cambrai/Sedan helping her older sister Florrie Schulz with her young family. When she wasn't working for her, she helped out in other families' homes.



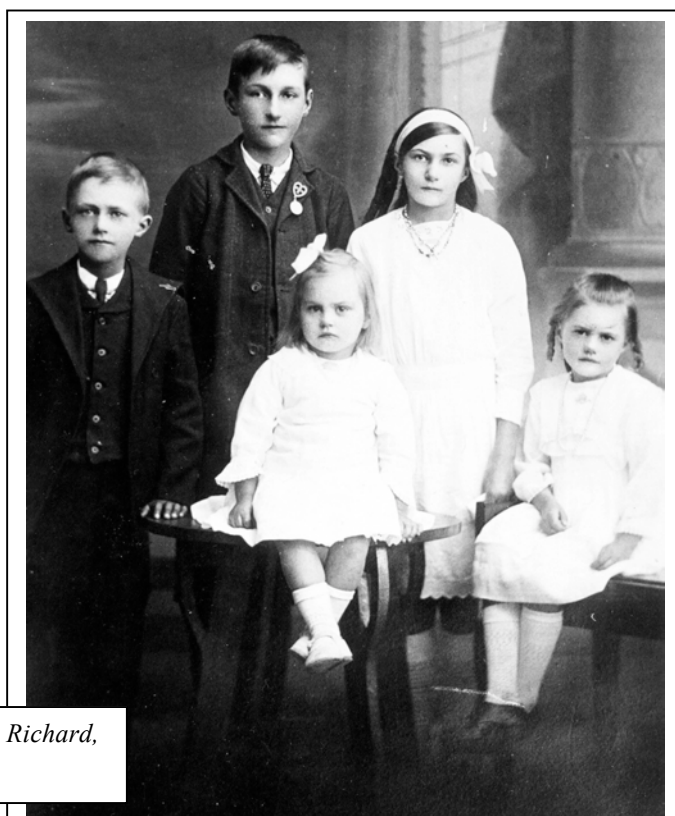
My father had to walk cross country from Moculta to visit her. He also walked to Rowlands Flat when she was home. I don't think he had a bike or anything. Before she knew Dad she nursed his older brother who was very sick and I think that's how she got to know Dad.

*Wedding day - my parents were married in 1904 at Gruenberg
The black dress was a German custom*

We children were all born at home as children were in those days. Neighbours used to care for the other children in the family. The midwife for all of us was Mutter Nitschke, a widow who lived with the Kurtzer family.



Baby Leslie (above)

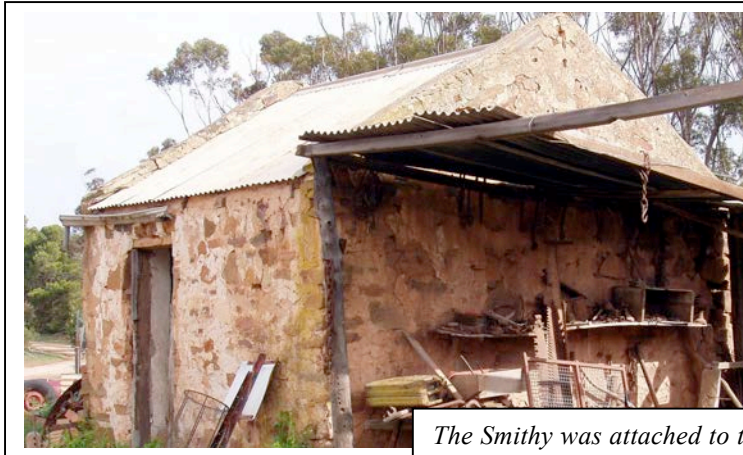


(Left to right) Gary, Richard, Linda, Alma, Laura

When my youngest brother, Leslie, was born it was night time and we were all sitting around the fireplace anxiously waiting. Dad had to keep water warm over the fireplace (a stand with four legs and a bar running across). Mutter Nitschke suddenly called out for my father to come and help, as she was having problems. Leslie probably got stuck as he was a very large baby, with lots of black hair and red skin.

I grew up in a very Christian home with loving parents. I always felt very safe and secure with them.

My father raised pigs for meat, which he shared with families less fortunate than us. I met one of these people 40 years later and she told me that we saved her family's life as at the time they had nothing. All excess meat was pickled to make it keep. They also had a couple of acres of vineyard for their own use, juicing the grapes in a wooden press. But later they rooted them up and cropped the land. My father was a handy man and could turn his hand to anything. He built himself a blacksmiths shed next to their old pug cottage, got a forge and anvil and made horse shoes himself as well as shoeing his 12 horses and making fancy iron gates.



The Smithy was attached to this room or "stube" (This was used by Selma's brother Arno Schulz when he visited in the 1950s). The smokehouse was attached to the southern side of this room

There was a huge pepper tree next to the shed which cast an enormous shadow as good as a room for the horses as they waited to be shod. We children also enjoyed playing in its shade.

Dad was an expert at making long, thick ropes and always whistled while he worked. He made every rope on our place, really strong thick ones. They were made from binder twine which was used to tie up the sheaves.

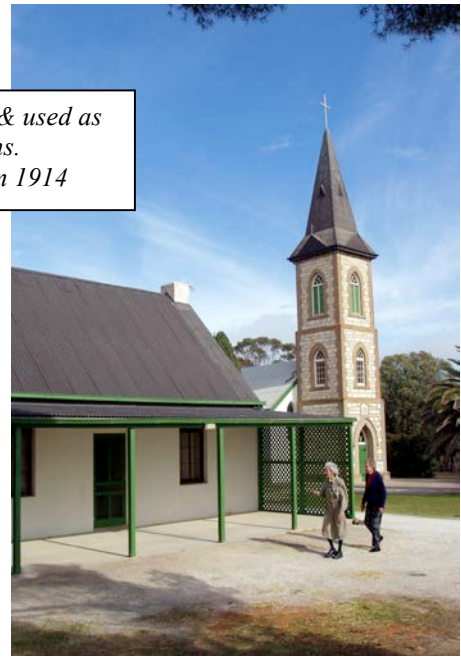
After the sheaves were cut, nothing was wasted. The binder twine was made into ropes and the sheaves were made into chaff with a chaff cutter to feed the horses.



The Schliebs buggy was restored by Harold Wendt and was used for Weddings and in the BV Vintage Festival parades as in this photo

We drove to church at Gruenberg each Sunday on a horse drawn buggy, slow but sure. I was baptised and confirmed in the Holy Cross Gruenberg church by Pastor J.J. Stolz, and I was also married there, by Pastor R. B. Reuther. Fifty years later we had our Golden Wedding service there. Our children were also baptised at Gruenberg.

Alma & Linda at the original Gruenberg Church (built in 1859 & used as the schoolhouse until 1876) where they had Confirmation lessons. Holy Cross Church was built in 1864 & the steeple was added in 1914



Everybody loved my mother. All of us children loved our parents and would never have swapped them. Mum had a harmonium – a little organ – and on this she had her loveliest glassware. We were not to touch this. My parents had strict rules which we always obeyed. Attending church also had its strict rules, such as no speaking or loud noise.

Mum was an excellent cook. She could make tasty meals out of whatever was at hand, and when people asked her for the recipe she was unable to give it, as she made it up as she went along. She also used to do mending for Mrs Kurtze which gave her a day away from home. Dad used to prepare the horse and buggy for her. She always brought home a kuchen which Mrs Kurtze used to make to sell in Angaston for pocket money. They were great friends. Mr Kurtze was Leslie's sponsor and he was so proud of his Godchild, always making a great fuss of him.

My mother had a wonderful singing voice. It was beautifully sweet and when she sang she made me cry, it was so touching. Everyone knew when she was singing in the church, someone told me. She also learnt to play the organ and she could play any song in any key. She had instruction in music from Dick Hentschke. We had many singing evenings with friends like Zinklers and Linkes and mother playing. {Laura Zinkler, one of their children, was deaf and dumb. She became very friendly with my sister Laura in particular. I still correspond with her each Christmas}. We also used to walk one and a half miles to our neighbours, the Ruidigers, and have afternoon tea with them. I always enjoyed this after walking in the beautiful fresh air.

A grocery hawker came to our home at Moculta every week with food and materials. In return he gave us three pence a dozen for our eggs and we also sold him butter. Our gardening water was pumped out of the dam into buckets or dipped out with buckets. Growing a few flowers to beautify the homestead was hard work. There was no water laid on then. We just relied on the Lord to fill the dams and house tanks. Our soap was home made from fat from our own butchering, and our clothes were also made at home.

We children created our own fun, as there was no money for toys or books. On birthdays and Christmas we were given clothes. My brother and I cried when we were given our first watch. I was sixteen. We knew how hard it was for our parents to find the money for such a lovely treasured gift.

School Days

Because I had to walk two and a half miles to school, I only began when I was seven years of age. Our fingers and toes would freeze as we walked on the frosty mornings. There were between 70 and 80 children at Moculta School. The first two years we were taught in German, but because of the war, we then got an English teacher (Mr Robinson) and we all had to learn to speak in English. There was a girl, Maude Higgs, in the school who spoke English and I think we all learnt from her. She had curly, shoulder length golden hair with lots of freckles. We all liked her very much. We always began with prayer in German before school started, but this was all stopped when the English teacher took over. This was when Saturday school began – still in German. I can't remember any discrimination against us during the war. We just learnt to speak in English and church services, confirmation and Saturday School continued in German.

I always regretted that I wasn't able to learn music formally, but there was just no opportunity. However, I did play the flute in the school band – first it was a tin whistle flute, then I progressed to a larger wooden flute. We would play as the children marched into school. I also enjoyed singing lessons and the teacher complimented me on my singing voice. He would try to correct the other children, but my voice always hit the right notes.

My father came to the school in the horse and buggy to get us when the weather was very wet. There were no cars around then. I knitted soldiers' socks walking home from school, and sometimes worked out our homework sums. I knitted seven pairs of khaki men's socks in the war years. I also knitted for my brothers and sisters and myself – 13 pairs in all. Mutter Henschke taught me to turn the heel of the sock and how the toes were finished off without a ridge.



Alma in front of Mutter Henschke's home in 2003

I remember when I started school I wore a pure white linen dress my mother made. It also had a collar. The skirt was a princess line which my mother particularly liked.

I had very thick long hair done tightly into a single plait, although most of the other girls had 2 plaits. One day I let my hair loose and tied it with a long ribbon and put a bow on the side. I felt very special. {After I left school I did my hair in a bun at the back of my head until I was about 18, when I had it cut short. It was too difficult to get a hat to fit over the extra knot of hair, and short hair was then fashionable. A barber cut my hair – I can't remember there being hairdressers. He didn't want to cut it off as it was so long and a lovely dark colour. I still have what he cut off, in a plait.}



The long and the short of it!



We played many games at school during recess and lunch – hopscotch, oranges and lemons, cricket, rounders, tip-cat (another ball game) and marbles. {Marbles was Eddie's game and he told me he always won}.

At home after school we had to take it in turns to get morning wood, fine sticks to light the wood stove. There were pigs and fowls to care for, and the older children had to get the cows from the paddock, often some distance from the house, and milk one or two. By the time I was seven I was milking cows. Once a cow stepped on my big toe, which was extremely painful, especially as I couldn't push her off in a hurry. I didn't like drinking milk because it came from a cow, so I certainly missed my quota of calcium. There was always a lot of washing up after milking, with the separator and milk buckets, and as I got older much of this fell on me. We used to make butter and I would turn the huge churn until the butter separated from the whey. We would do 14 pounds at a time and it was sold for a few pence a pound. One day I was playing in the cow shed with my brothers and sisters and I decided to make a swing for them. I put a beam across the high posts in the laneway of the shed from which I hung a rope. When I sat on my finished swing the beam immediately collapsed onto me, hurting my upper back. I struggled up to the house to tell my mother, but was unable to speak. I was probably severely winded, and it took some time before my voice returned.

When I turned 14 I left school, despite it being only three months before my qualifying certificate exam. My teacher told me that I would have passed it, which proved to me that I was educated enough. I wanted to be home helping to care for my baby sister, Ivy. After Leslie was born I helped my mother again. He used to try to toddle to school in a little fawn jumpsuit and it was my job to run after him and bring him home. He was always going to be a teacher and in his later years he became a well loved and respected Primary School Principal. He could sing beautifully, but Dick, my older brother, could not sing a note in tune.

Soon after leaving school I was asked by the teacher to be a sewing mistress to teach a class of girls basic stitches. I was very proud that I could earn the small salary of three pounds every three months, as money was very scarce and we were a large family. I was my mother's right hand at home where I felt I had to do all the work while my younger siblings could go outside, play and have fun. However, I was eager to learn to do everything so I could become an efficient housekeeper and wife one day. I was often asked to be a servant in large families, as they knew I'd had plenty of experience in my own, and although I didn't like leaving home, I invariably got to like the family concerned. The first family I helped I think was the Linke family when I was about sixteen. They had nine or ten children, and I helped out when the mother had a baby. The usual length of time I stayed was about a fortnight, doing things like baking bread, feeding the pigs and milking cows.

I began Confirmation instruction when I was 14 and I walked three miles each week to the old school house near Gruenberg Church where we had our lessons. I was confirmed when I was 15. We were 12 confirmees. The girls wore white dresses with wreaths in our hair, while the boys wore a buttonhole spray of orange blossom. I still remember all we had to recite. It was a special day indeed.



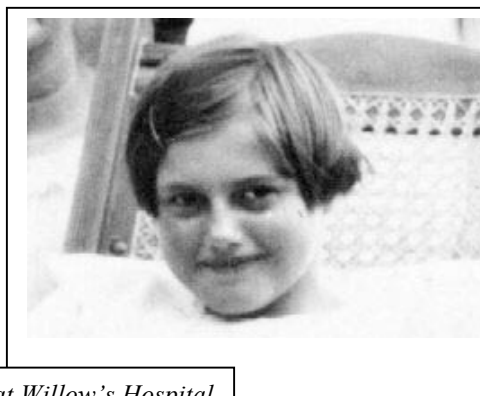
Alma is fourth from the left

Laura

My sister Laura was nearly seven years younger than me. We were on our way to school one day and Gary realised he'd forgotten his nature study book. Laura offered to run home and get it, because she could run very quickly. Our dog had been scampering along with her, and when he crossed in front of her she fell over him, and at first didn't seem to be affected. About three months later mother discovered a swelling on her knee, and in fact the whole knee appeared swollen. The doctor said she had fluid on the knee that needed attention. So she had her leg put in plaster with a weight on her foot to stretch her leg. This looked dreadful, and we were very sad every time we had to leave her in Willows Hospital, Light Pass. Dr Schulz was a very good doctor, but Laura's leg "had him beat". It just got worse instead of better.



Laura in a group photograph of patients at Willow's Hospital



Although she put on weight and grew well, her poor leg stayed undeveloped because of not being used, and being in a wheelchair much of the time. My parents finally brought her home. Dad had to carry her despite the fact that she was very heavy. Eventually he got crutches for her and she stayed at home for a couple of years, I think. She managed very well with her crutches and could even move faster than we could walk because her strides were longer. She never complained about her leg, and seemed to accept her disability, despite the fact that her leg was always plastered or tied up. Laura had a loving temperament and we were all very close to her.



*Laura, cousin Lena Menzel, & Alma
(this is not the dog that Laura tripped over)*

The family tried other doctors to see if they could work out what was wrong, and brother Richard drove her to Gawler in a motor cycle and side car to visit Dr. Daws, but to no avail. During this time mother gave her correspondence lessons. She was confirmed when she was 14, but was unable to kneel at the altar. Shortly after this she got a violent headache that never left her. Her doctor, Dr Drever, was on holidays and the new one didn't know what to do for her. I can remember my father carrying her out of the house for the last time. She was taken to Angaston hospital where she died of meningitis. We were told later that people at the hospital could hear her screaming out from the pain of her disease.

We were all devastated, especially my mother who cried and cried for months after her death. She had spent three years out of her short fourteen and a half years in hospital. Brother Gary was working at Fred Schillings, near the Sturt Highway east of Truro, when Laura died. He walked all the way home in the dark to be with us. We thought that was a tremendous effort for a boy of 17 years to come home like that, especially as it was a stormy dark night. He found his way by the light from the lightning flashes.

{Many years later, Leslie was on his way by train back to Teachers' College after being best man at Gary and Lena's wedding when he also became ill with the same disease. He was saved by the doctors opening a vein in his ankle}.

Anecdotes from My Teenage Years

Gary worked for Paul Schilling at Moculta after he left school. They would gladly have taken him on as their own – they had no children and were comfortably off – but he got too homesick, and came back home. When we were young we all loved home and became homesick when we were away.

We had pet lambs each lambing season. These could become quite a pest if they got into the vegetable garden. One of these lambs was Laura's special friend and it used to stay near her plastered knee. During my teens we had a pet galah and a cockatiel. Both could speak and I taught them to say "Alma, kiss cocky". One could also say "aeroplane". Once after Gottlieb Bartsch had been visiting us we missed our cockatiel, and they discovered him when they heard him saying "Alma, kiss cocky". They realised who owned him and returned him to me.

We had a pony called Minnie and she was a brat. She nipped my arm once when I was standing in front of her and was silly enough to look away. Dick could manage her well, or so he thought. Once he rode her to Moculta to get the mail and when he came out of the shop Minnie was gone. She'd managed to untie the rope and take herself off home. So Dick had to walk home. Usually, though, Dick got on well with her and enjoyed training her to do tricks. While he was on her back he could make her stand up on her hind legs. The only horse I ever rode was one of the Zwars', called May. She was a beautiful horse to ride – it was like sitting on velvet when riding on her back.

I can remember a particular family outing at my Uncle (Gottlieb) and Aunt Schliebs' home at Tanunda. It had been a beautiful day but on the way home we discovered there had been a cloud burst and the creek was flooded up over the road. Dick was driving his car and before we knew it, we were in water. He couldn't stop quickly enough, so he kept going and managed to get the car partially through until it stalled with the back wheels still in the water. We screamed so much that the people from up the road came down with lanterns to investigate. Somehow they got the car going again and we headed off for home. The car stalled again and we had to walk home on the muddy road in the dark!

Cleaning teeth was not classed as very important when I was a child, although I do remember our teacher telling us to use the soot from the chimney to rub on our teeth. You could also buy dentifrice, a pink powder that frothed up when it was wet. When I was about 16, Dick and I were home on our own while our parents and the rest of the family were at Blanchetown staying with Uncle Heinrich Schilling. I was suffering from toothache and had holes in my teeth and so I went to the dentist at Truro. He suggested that he remove all my teeth, which he did – the upper teeth first, then later all my bottom teeth. I wanted it done well before I had a sweetheart – I didn't want him to ever see me without teeth!

Soon after I left school I was asked to join a singing group in Moculta, called "Choral Class". "Choral Class" was a small group – we practised at Harry Steinert's place.



The H Steinert home as it was in 2003

Harry Steinert was the conductor and Bruno Fechner and Frank Hentschke played the piano for us. There were about 12 of us. We practised once a week and we'd perform in the school hall as well as visit places whenever we were asked. I can remember singing at a Golden Wedding once. I have always enjoyed singing. It's been my delight and main interest, and still is. I joined the Gruenberg church choir when I was about 16. We had quite a large choir, about 20 or 30 people. I could sing both alto and soprano, but I usually sang soprano. About two years after I knew Eddie, he joined the choir with me. Paul Schilling, our conductor, welcomed him with open arms, as he had a lovely singing voice as a second tenor, and he made the third male in the tenor section. Eddie gave up the Ebenezer Men's Choir to be able to spend more time with me. We sang in this choir until we were married.

Courting Days

When I was 18 I received a very unexpected letter in a special floral envelope from Edward Zwar, who said that he'd like to meet me in Nuriootpa at a Mission Festival he was attending. It was in beautiful handwriting. I didn't know him, but was quite thrilled that someone cared enough for me to write me a letter. My mother actually opened the letter first, as my Christian name on the envelope was incorrect. He called me Elsie instead of Alma. She then sent it on to me at Trescowthicks where I was working. I answered it, agreeing to meet him, even though I was normally a shy sort of girl. So we met outside Nuriootpa institute for the Mission Festival which we attended together. I was most impressed with his beautiful singing voice. I don't know how Eddie got to know who I was. I felt he was an answer to prayer, as I hadn't previously met anyone who appealed to me romantically. Olga Roehr, my good friend, knew Eddie and I think he may have got to know of me through her. Eddie also got to know my father through their trips to the Murray Flats and had a lot of respect for him. Eddie then came to see me in his mother's horse and sulky and meet my parents who welcomed him into our home. I wasn't really ready for romance, being very shy and it all being so new to me, and so I told him not to come too often. Whenever we did meet we always wore our Sunday best clothes. Eddie would sometimes minimise his own worth, calling himself "the black sheep of the family" and telling me I would be unlucky with him, but I prayed and knew God's help was always there. Life can be beautiful if we walk with God.



Check out the socks!



*Ed trained for military service in 1920
but was not required to go to war*

When Eddie came to see me at home on Sunday during the summer months we would enjoy going to the Methodist Church at Angaston in the evening before he took me back to Trescowthicks, a fruit canning factory south of Angaston, where I stayed during the week and worked on the fruit.



*Ed & Alma with Laura, Gary & cousin
Lena Menzel*

I worked at Trescowthicks during the fruit season for about nine years. The season lasted about four months. We began with apricots, then peaches, pears, plums and prunes. I remember picking prunes into large containers and receiving nine pence for filling one. I worked overtime on that with my

girl friend Olga. Her parents put her in my care because she was younger than me. There were four fruit peeling machines, and I was one of the people who worked on them. Pears were stuck on a spike and I turned a handle to peel off the skin. As the season progressed I had various jobs cutting and drying fruit. We were allowed to help ourselves to any fallen fruit in the orchards and could also make use of any cans which were distorted after coming out of the cooker (this didn't often happen). There were thirty girls working in the factory, and about fourteen of us who were from further away stayed in accommodation adjacent to the Trescowthick homestead. Some girls came from as far away as Swan Reach.



Laurine Graetz ,Olga Roehr, Elsie Matichoss, Linda Graetz, Erna Steinert & Alma sitting on the steps leading to the front door of the Trescowthick home. The girls are displaying paper flowers they had made as a pastime



When I was nineteen or twenty I went to work for Mr and Mrs Lionel Shannon at Kapunda. They were looking for a servant girl and the Zwars heard about it and thought I would be suitable. I mainly did cooking and I enjoyed it very much. I worked in a little blue and white kitchen and when Mrs Shannon's mother came to stay she was most impressed with how well I kept it. My mother then needed me at home for a fortnight and Marie Zwar took over. I worked there altogether for about two years and we were a very happy family. I was fond of both Mr and Mrs Shannon and became friendly with the other servant girl there, Rhoda Heintze. My mother eventually wanted me to come back home again and I was very sorry to leave. After I came back home to help Mum, my sister Linda went to work at Munchenbergs which surprised me as I thought my mother needed her help at home. She stayed there for about two years, where she had to work very hard. Soon afterwards she married Bert Wood. Linda also worked at Trescowthicks with me. My youngest sister Ivy worked at the Truro Crown Hotel as a housemaid and waitress and really enjoyed her work there. After she married Keith Miller she lived only about two miles from our parents, half way between Truro and Moculta.



The Miller home now owned by Tim & Jennifer Fairey (nee Schliebs) Jennifer is the daughter of Ross & Dianne Schliebs

Ivy often walked to see Mum and help her as her health was not good. Mum had a leaking valve to her heart which developed soon after she was fifty and an ulcerated leg from quite a young age. Every time she had a child she had trouble with her legs. She had varicose veins too. She had a stroke when she was 74 years old, and after about a fortnight in hospital, she died with her whole family around her. My father stayed on in the family home with my brother Dick and sister-in-law Erna living with him and caring for him. His health was good almost until he died when he was 84. He had bladder trouble. He slipped back after Mum died and never got over her death as they were a devoted couple.

While I was working for Shannons I wanted a day off to visit the Zwars at Ebenezer and Mr Shannon harnessed the horse and dray for me. When I arrived at Ebenezer Eddie was there, having come home from batching at Stonefield. He fed the horse some chaff and took the bit out of its mouth so it could eat properly. He had to leave before me and told me to make sure I remembered to put the bit back in. I forgot all about it, and very soon after we started off the horse realised he had a free rein and ran faster and faster. I held onto the reins for all I was worth. It took all the energy I had left in me. That was the quickest trip I ever had back to the Shannons! How we didn't hit their gate post with the wheels of the dray I'll never know. I don't know who was more covered with froth, the horse or me! I certainly thanked my all loving God for his protection and guidance that evening. The track was new to me, but the horse miraculously found its own way along winding trails up hill and down dale until it reached its home. Later, when Gloria was about sixteen years old, Eddie and I took her to see the Shannons. They were thrilled to see us and we spent some time with them. *(In recent years Gloria went to this home, now owned by Annie and Rob Humpris, to do embroidery each week – ed. note).*

Eddie was a very fast runner. He dragged me along to a couple of races at a young people's picnic and we won the thread and needle race once. The cigarette race was another one – the boy ran down with a cigarette in his mouth which the girl had to light. The boy then had to return with the lit cigarette.

We got engaged on 21st April 1929 when I was twenty. Eddie bought me a beautiful engagement ring. It had three diamonds with two diamond shoulders. I picked it out from a catalogue he gave me. When it arrived it was too tight, so I got it enlarged. Soon afterwards I was washing my hands in the basin and carelessly left it on. Unbeknown to me it came off and when I threw out the basin of water the ring fell under the rose bush where my mother later discovered it.



Alma aged 20

Eddie had no money as he worked on the family farm until he was 35 with no payment. His father, Paul Zwar, had died unexpectedly at the age of 56 leaving no will, and it was a terrible shock for his family to have to take over the farm work and pay off all the estate debts (including probate) as it was during the depression years.

Eddie and his brother Alf were both wonderful workers, Eddie mainly at Stonefield and Alf on the home property. Rudi, the youngest, was spoilt which created friction within the family because he got out of doing any work. He was popular with the girls and a very good dancer. However, one night on his way home on his pushbike he collided with another bike, both of them travelling without lights, and this affected his brain. He was never the same.

The Zwar family was joking and friendly when they were young but life was too hard for them, and their constant struggle to make ends meet made them bitter. Eventually they had to sell the homestead where Mutter Zwar and Alf lived. Alf stayed batching, I think, on the home property – I can't really remember. He became very withdrawn and later got very bad arthritis. Gary had already left home well before the depression and became a salesman of Aladin lamps and later his own Zwar washing machine. Mutter Zwar went to live in Magill with Frieda who was the only member of the family to gain anything financially from the estate. Marie had married Ed Blesing in 1931 and lived in Adelaide. Their daughter, Joyce, was later to be our flowergirl.

Sometimes Eddie's mother gave him a small amount of pocket money and he saved up to buy me a round kitchen grater as a gift. The Zwar family gave approval for the cost of the engagement ring to come out of their expense account, so they must have liked me. Eddie used to trap foxes and sell their skins and from this money he bought me a lovely white kitchen cabinet. My mother also liked this cabinet and was quite sorry to see it go to Stonefield when I married (I still have that cabinet in my kitchen at Nuriootpa).

Eddie pegged out a fox skin – he'd trapped the fox after he discovered it killing lambs at Stonefield – and gave it to me after he had cured it. He thought I would like it and wear it around my shoulders. But this didn't appeal to me and so I just kept it to look at. It had black tips on the ears and black shiny whiskers. I still have this fox in my wardrobe.

Before we were married Eddie's parents' homestead at Ebenezer was auctioned. I was there with Eddie. I think a Mr Roehr bought the property. All the effects were also auctioned off. Eddie bought two horses and the hooded buggy, which was all he could afford. Mother owned a sulky and a horse. I bid on a beautiful large sideboard with lots of fancy woodwork and it was knocked down to me after my one bid. There was another sideboard there, black with a large mirror, but I liked the one I bought much better. That sideboard still takes pride of place here in my lounge room at Nuriootpa.

My Wedding Day

We were married on 28th August 1937. The day was windy, but at the time of the wedding the weather was beautiful. The sun was shining after a shower of rain, and everything as we drove to church that afternoon looked fresh and new. The chauffer was Ted Andretzke, and the car was a black Desoto.

Laura Rosenzweig was standing at the door of the church as we arrived and I can still hear her say “beautiful, beautiful”. I was dressed in white, my four bridesmaids and two flower girls were in gold satin with shoulder sprays of lavender, gold and white. They also had lavender sashes. Our wedding bouquets were white lilies with their green leaves tied with lavender sashes. Frieda brought us the flowers with a wooden backing and I made up the arrangements. I wanted almond blossom decorations for the church, but that year the trees bloomed late and so I had to make up my own arrangement using white and pale pink crepe paper. I made a large archway through which we walked up to the altar. It looked very nice, too.



The following article appeared in a local newspaper:

**Mr E Zwar and Miss Alma Schliebs Wed at Gruenberg:
Bride in White Matalasse**

Alma, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs E Schliebs, Moculta, and Edward, second son of Mrs and the late Mr Paul Zwar, Ebenezer, were married by the Rev. R.B. Reuther in Gruenberg Church on August 28. The Bride, who entered on the arm of her father, was gowned in white silk matalasse with silk lace cowl and spray of orange blossom: the back of the bodice being trimmed with lace yolk and tiny buttons. The sleeves were long to a point at the wrist.

The skirt, cut on the cross, merged into a long train. The long silver embroidered tulle veil, lent by Mrs A. Rothe (cousin), was worn halo fashion and held in place by a wreath of orange blossom, being gathered closely to form a cape. She carried a sheaf of lilies tied with satin ribbon.

Miss Erna Parbs and Miss Linda Schliebs were bridesmaids, and misses Freda Zwar (groom's sister) and Ivy Schliebs (bride's sister) were maids of honour: all being frocked alike in citron delustrated rayon satin crepe down to the ground, relieved with mauve sprays on frock and hair. Each carried a sheaf of lilies tied with mauve satin ribbon.

Joyce Blesing, of Paradise(niece of groom) was flower girl, dressed in pink dotted net with tiny frills of pink satin ribbon down to the ground. She carried a posy tied with pink satin ribbon and wore a matching spray in her hair. Mr R. Schliebs (bride's brother) was best man and Mr Bert Woods was groomsman.

The church was beautifully decorated by sisters and friends of the bride with bowls of blossoms and mixed flowers: an arch of mockalmond blossom and palms having been prettily arranged. After the ceremony, the guests were entertained at the home of the bride's parents. Mr & Mrs Zwar's future home will be at Stonefield.

My father walked into the church with me. He found it difficult as he felt very shy. I was the only daughter he escorted into the church to be married. After the church service we went to Tanunda to Marchant Photographers to get the wedding photos taken. Mrs Kurtze was the cook for my reception which was held at home, because Mum was incapacitated with a bad leg which she had to keep elevated.

I remember arguments at the wedding table. Joyce the flowergirl wanted to sit next to the bride, but she'd been placed opposite me. Eddie had to end up putting his foot down, but Joyce still sat next to me!

After the reception I went back to my home at Moculta while Eddie went to Mickans to shear sheep the next morning. This continued for a fortnight, during which time I helped Mum get her home back to proper order. Gus Falland loaded up furniture and our possessions from the Ebenezer homestead on his truck which he took down to Stonefield with me and Eddie.

Then our married life together, began.

Married Life and Children

We lived at Stonefield for 38 years. Eddie had batched there for 12 years before we could buy it from his father's estate. He had great confidence and asked the bank for a loan so we could get married. We started our married life almost penniless, but with God's help we survived. We must have each had a heart of gold, because there was nothing else. Before we were married Dick and Dad used to spend odd days with Eddie helping repair the house to make it liveable for us. There was a lot of salt damp which was eating out the stonework and this had to be plastered up. Later Arty Steinert, Eddie Steinert's brother from Tanunda, did the finishing touches on our Stonefield home. Eddie built a skylight in our kitchen while I was in hospital with Gloria to allow more light in. Our kitchen had been very dark as the laundry had been built by the former occupants across its only window. I was delighted to come home from hospital and find sunlight coming into our kitchen. Eddie remarked how lovely my hair looked, shining brightly with the sun on it.



The home at Stonefield as it was in 2003. It was built by the Rohlach family. They sold the farm of approximately 1700 acres to the Zwar family in 1914

Once when Eddie was away with sheep, I saddled the horse and went and found milk thistles for the fowls. I brought back several large bran bags full of thistles. She was a lovely horse to ride. That was when I was pregnant for the first time. I felt so well, happy and light as a feather, so slim and with quite a tiny waist.

When I was about six months pregnant I decided to clean up the old kitchen that Eddie used for storing tools, harnesses and other equipment. I wanted to make it nice and tidy for him and through my bending the baby turned in my womb and I found I couldn't straighten up because of excruciating pain. I ended up in Angaston hospital where I had to stay for about a fortnight with complete rest. After I came out of hospital I stayed with Mum for a while before returning home. When I went into labour Eddie harnessed the horse and buggy and drove me to Angaston where Gloria Jillian, our first child, was born without difficulty at 20 to 7 in the morning of 1st September 1938. Eddie waited at the hospital for a while, then decided to leave and buy vegetables before returning home. In those days women stayed in hospital with their new baby for a fortnight. Any trips Eddie made to see me had to be with the horse and buggy, a distance of at least 20 miles, so visits were not very frequent. Bert Wood, my future brother-in-law, brought us home from hospital in his car and Eddie was there, all nicely dressed up to greet me and the new baby. It was shearing time but because it was a Sunday all was quiet. Linda Lindner, a young serving girl, then came to help in the house for about a fortnight.

Our clothes basket (which was a wedding gift) was made into Gloria's crib and it served its purpose well. I almost felt afraid to handle Gloria as she was so tiny (7 lb 7 oz), and when I asked Eddie what I should do, he said "she'll tell you!" Modern women are very lucky with their husbands – our husbands never changed nappies or handled their babies unless they were clean and sweet smelling.

When I went into labour with Malcolm, our second child, Eddie was at a sale at Truro where he was selling our bull. He wanted to get rid of that bull before the servant girl came because he was

concerned for her safety. But I became concerned about myself once labour pains began and I was all alone. He came back late, about 8.30 pm, and had to go to Eddie Steinert to call for help as he needed a car to get to Angaston quickly. Mrs. Steinert was also needed, as she stayed overnight to look after Gloria. I felt as if the baby was about to be born and my waters broke as the car turned into the highway from the Stonefield turnoff. Eddie sat with me in the back seat helping me cope while Eddie Steinert drove. One of the lights fell off the car while we were racing along, but Eddie insisted “don’t stop! Just keep driving!” The car seemed to stop from fright when it reached Angaston hospital and Malcolm was born on the back seat soon after 10 pm on 2nd September 1940. He was a big baby, 9 lb 10 oz. I then didn’t see him for a whole day or even longer (it certainly seemed a very long time to me) because the nurses said they didn’t want me to see him while he was badly bruised. I was really worried something may be wrong. The doctor then approached the nurses and made them show me my baby. He was quite a bluish colour. When Eddie came to see me in hospital he brought two year old Gloria and Dulcie Linke, our house help, as well. It saddened me to see Gloria in another person’s arms, because I was used to holding her myself. She was *my* child.

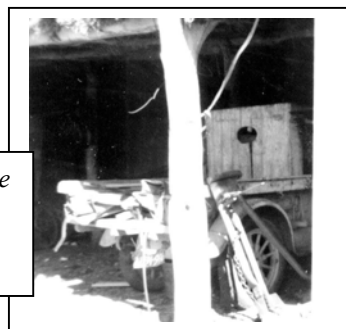
Eddie Steinert again drove us home from hospital and because of his helpfulness we asked him to be Malcolm’s sponsor which he gladly accepted. Both Gloria and Malcolm slept in our room in little white twin cots. They looked so pretty, but we had many sleepless nights.

By the time Cedric came along we had a car – a grey ute (1923 Dodge buckboard) – and so Eddie could drive me to hospital.



Left :Eddie with baby Gloria

The 1923 Dodge buckboard in the shed at Stonefield (It is now in a shed at Camawald, Coonawarra awaiting restoration)



Cedric was a much smaller baby than Malcolm, only 7 lb 10 oz. He was born at midnight the very beginning of ANZAC Day 1942. I don’t think I was in hospital so long this time.

With the advent of three children I lost my lounge room which had lovely blue satin curtains, a round table (which my grand daughter, Jane, later did up and now has in her home), six chairs which are my dining chairs today and my lovely old sideboard. Gloria and Malcolm moved in there and Cedric slept in our room.

It was only thirteen months later that John came along. I was very large, and John was a huge baby a fortnight overdue, weighing 10 lb. The staff thought I was having twins. I had a prolapsed womb through John’s birth. I didn’t take much notice of this at the time, and it was only later that it began giving me trouble. While we were in hospital the nursing staff called John “Jumbo” because all the other newborns were girls about half his size! I did lots of knitting while I was in hospital, little jumpers for the baby. Again, I was there for a fortnight – the doctor insisted on the new mothers having a good rest.

When I got home with four children, the oldest only five years old, I felt I really had my hands full. I had a real struggle to cope. Washing days occurred almost daily. We had a copper, a double trough, a washboard and a wringer. Although it was a lot of work I enjoyed seeing all the clean clothes hanging out on the line.

One Sunday Eddie and I were driving to church in our little hooded buggy with Gloria as a baby when the ponies noticed two camels in McBeans paddock half way up Accommodation Hill. They immediately took fright and ran flat out with Eddie hanging onto the reins for all he was worth. They kept running all the way to Gruenberg Church, through two creeks, up hill and down dale and not once did they slow down until we were up to the fence at the church. They were quite white with froth. We had had to hold up our rug to shield ourselves, particularly from all the faeces that came flying back because of their fear. Some of the congregation helped calm the horses and wipe them down.

We had a very traumatic time when we nearly lost John with a terrible bronchial cough when he was 12 months old. I'm sure he got it from the lovely iron cot he slept in. I woke up one night and it was bright moonlight. John was standing, holding onto the cold rail and watching us while we slept (and perhaps snored). He developed a bad cough which got worse, so we took him to Dr Drever. He immediately put him in steam and an inhalant and we had to leave him in hospital. Later that night the doctor looked at all his patients and passed by little John. However, he told us, something made him go back and recheck him, and he discovered he was choking and blue in the face. The doctor quickly had to operate and make an incision in his throat and pull out the offending matter. He saved his life by his quick action. John was in hospital for a fortnight and we visited him as often as we were able, but were not allowed to show ourselves, so we didn't upset him. That was the hardest part. I looked through a crack in the door and he opened his lovely big brown eyes, seemed to look straight at me, and closed them again. It was heartrending for me.

The day we could pick him up we went in and the nurse was feeding him. When I said, "John", he pushed the spoon away and reached up to me. He chattered in his language all the way home, just like a bird in a cage when freed to fly away. The little scar on his throat is still there.



Little John

We had a sideboard in the boy's bedroom (which had been our lounge room). One night I was awake and heard a noise. I got up and discovered Malcolm walking in his sleep along the sideboard. Although it wasn't far from his bed, God knows how he managed to get up there in his sleep. I had a job to gently coax him off it.

There were some bad years on the farm, unbearably so sometimes. Eddie had to leave with the sheep to find feed on the roads for months on end. Water was a problem, so he always had to come back to our property to give the animals a drink at the bore hole. At first the cows wouldn't drink bore water, so water had to be carted from three miles away to mix with the bore water until they got used to its saltiness. Some died of the sand accumulating in their bodies. Meanwhile, I had to stay home with four children all under five years. I had to feed and carry water and molasses in kerosene tins to feed the fourteen horses and four cows. The molasses had first to be dissolved with hot water as it was thick and hard to get out of the drum. The horses loved to drink this and it was

also sprinkled on straw to make it palatable. The haystacks were full of red sand as I pulled out the sheaves. My hands were often wet from washing clothes and that, coupled with the dust and dirt from feeding stock, brought out eczema on my hands and face. I suffered dreadfully from this which caused my skin to swell up and weep from the pores. Yet I had to continue doing all the hard work on my own with the children to care for as well. To help the children breathe I dampened old lace curtain material and wrapped it around their faces to filter out the dust. Most nights I couldn't sleep for itchiness and walked in the yard in the moonlight for relief while everyone else slept peacefully, not realising how I suffered. At one time it was so bad that I had to call Eddie home from Dutton where he was helping other people with their harvest for next to no pay. The bee man was in our bushland and I gave him a letter to deliver to Eddie as he lived near to where Eddie was working.

While my husband was away another time, one of the horses died. I had to get help from the neighbour, Eddie Steinert, to bury it, and as I had no means of transport, I decided to take the children in the wheelbarrow. I took milk with me for baby John, and German cake for the others. John and Cedric travelled in the wheelbarrow, while the older two, Gloria and Malcolm, walked with me. When we got there (more than a mile away), I asked for a drink of water and told them my sad story. They were very sympathetic, but couldn't come immediately, only later in the day. So I thanked them for the water and walked back home again. Of course the older children couldn't walk any more, so I had all four children on the wheelbarrow. I couldn't go much more than a few yards before needing a rest, and I was exhausted when we eventually got back home. However, with four hungry children to feed and look after, I had to immediately begin chopping wood for the fire so I could begin cooking. My kind neighbour, who came to dispose of the horse, later cut up some wood for me and sharpened the axe which he said was very blunt. And so life went on and eventually God again sent rain, the feed came and things improved.

I washed, cooked, baked, sewed, mended clothes, ironed, milked (fourteen cows at one stage), made butter and tried hard to get a garden going around home. We had no water laid on, I just saved the dish water. The butcher called once a week from Sedan, and occasionally we had the joy of having a Murray cod brought to us. I would cook it in rich lovely fresh cream. It was delicious, a lovely treat. The green grocer also called once a week or fortnight, and that was the only time we saw fruit unless we drove eleven miles to get some. I baked everything we needed. I made whole meal bread, German cake and honey cakes and biscuits. I made my own yeast using two small potatoes, a pinch of hops, sugar and flour. The warm rear of the stove was ideal for culturing the yeast. I made sauerkraut in bulk when I had excess cabbages, and I stored it in stone jars. My whole time was taken up with work of some kind. Mending was very time consuming, especially trouser seats which wore out through bike riding and the knees of my husband's trousers.

Alma's Sauerkraut:

*1 cup sugar
1 cup spiced vinegar
caraway seeds (about 1 teasp)
pinch salt
finely chopped cabbage*

Boil all ingredients except cabbage until sugar is dissolved and then add cabbage. Remove from stove almost immediately. Seal it while hot.

All the bulk food – jams, sauerkraut, meat, sugar, flour, potatoes, apples, etc. – were stored in the separator room, the room next to the kitchen which was very dark because I hung a curtain over the window. Because of the debt owed on the farm I always used my own income for all the household

expenses other than bulk purchases which Eddie always paid for. In our early years all income from the sheep went straight to the bank to pay off the debt.

My personal income came from cows and fowls. We reared our own chooks and the roosters went into the pot. I had to kill and dress them. We had lovely soups. We also had a couple of sheepdogs and cats lived in the haystack – up to thirteen one time. They spent a lot of time catching mice and I also gave them skim milk. The fowls were given the screenings from wheat, scraps and skim milk, which they shared with the 2 pigs we always kept. The pigs were housed at the end of the cow shed in a sty. Killing the pig would be a full day's work, beginning about five a.m. Nothing was wasted. After the pig was killed the blood was kept for making black pudding – it had to be beaten until it cooled to prevent it coagulating. The skin then had to be scraped until it was quite white, removing all hair and outer layers of skin. This was done using hot water and knives. Everyone worked at this, even the smallest children. After the meat was cut up the wurst had to be made, both the white pudding and the black pudding. I was usually the last to bed, finishing with the cooking of all the sausages. The next morning the rest of the family would wake to the table covered with sausages and Dad frying blutwurst for breakfast. The sausages would be hung in big meat safes to ensure the air could get around them so they wouldn't go mouldy. The pork all had to be pickled and the ham and bacon smoked. In addition, metwurst was often made and this also had to be smoked. The smokehouse was at the end of the old woolshed. On one occasion the boys collected some dried horehound from around the sheep dip, as this made wonderful smoke. However, the metwurst was almost inedible as it was so tainted with horehound! Usually smoke was made from dampened woodchips which smouldered beneath the metwursts hung in rows from wooden rails suspended from the ceiling. We always kept the lard and “grieven” – minced bacon offcuts. Pieces of pork were often shared with neighbours.

Mr Oliver was an agent who came to our place twice. The first time, he was invited inside for lunch and he praised our ham saying it was the best he'd ever tasted (a little bit of praise goes a long way). When he next visited, Eddie was loading the wool and asked him to give a hand. However, he declined saying that he didn't want to roughen his hands. He didn't get invited to lunch *that* day!

At one time we had a big Friesian bull called Sweet William. I had been wondering why the cows weren't giving more milk and when I went down to the paddock very early one morning before they'd walked up to be milked, I discovered the reason why. The huge bull was lying down drinking from the cow standing next to him. No wonder he was so big and fat. We sold him after that! Another similar story relates to a pig we once had. It took a liking to the cows and used to spend all its time with them. It's only now, after seeing a photo of a pig suckling a cow, that I realise the reason for the pig liking the cows' company.

Looks like Sweet William



Another time we had an unpredictable bull which Ed decided to leave at our neighbours, the Lofflers, while he was in Keith. He was concerned for my safety. Later a cow calved and she had an enormous udder, but I couldn't find her calf anywhere. I was searching for it on foot and when I eventually found it I began bringing them both home. I suddenly looked up and there was the bull which had escaped from its enclosure and made its own way home. But blocking it from reaching

me was a long line of cows all standing inquisitively looking at me, and I managed to get the cow and its calf into the yard without any trouble. I felt that God's hand was certainly protecting me that day.

One afternoon I couldn't see the cows anywhere, so I asked Ed if he could get them in for me. He wanted me to help him finish what he was doing first, and by the time he went to get them they were all puffing away at the gate. And our dear little dog was also panting just as hard as the cows. He knew what I wanted, so he had gone and found them for me.

Eddie carted water in 200 gallon tanks three miles when the biggest droughts were on, for the stock and the house, if there was no wind for the windmill to pump water and the dam was dry. Hay was brought in from Blanchetown.

Many a time Eddie went out helping other people with their harvest when we didn't get enough rain for a harvest ourselves. He needed to earn some cash. He had to ride miles on his push bike. In spite of all the hard work we did, with God as our partner, we were always healthy except one year when my husband and children all got terrible colds. Of course I had no time to catch one as I was just too busy tending and feeding everyone, as well as the animals. At this time the oldest child, Gloria, was ten. The wood had to be chopped and it was hard to keep the wood fires going. But there was no electricity of any kind, no water laid on, no taps in the house, no bathroom. All water had to be carried by me. I almost feel worn out now writing about it all. For the whole of that week while the family was sick a storm raged making my outside chores doubly difficult. Every day I could hardly feed the animals because of the fury of the wind. Gloria and Dad were the first ones to recover, and when the family could take over I felt like a piece of elastic which had completely lost its spring. I'm sure that the eucalyptus medication I gave myself helped keep me healthy, although dosing up the rest of the family didn't help them.

How we battled for a living during adverse seasons with dust storms lasting a week. The animals could hardly eat, and what hay we gave, the wind just rolled away to where it would be caught in the cotton bushes further out in the paddock.

The rabbit population increased and people set traps everywhere. Our neighbour came onto our land to set some traps, and we were amazed that he caught 500. He then sold them for about five shillings each after skinning them. The skins could be sold also. Our boys also caught rabbits and made quite a bit of pocket money especially in the late fifties when they were able to sell gutted rabbit carcasses to W Angliss and Co. who sent drivers to pick them up from the farm. Otto Just began coming to the farm from Adelaide soon after we were married in order to trap rabbits. He had refrigerators rigged up at the back of his Ford A buckboard and when they were full he went home again. He used to sleep in his vehicle which he housed in one of the straw roofed sheds, a cool spot. He loved the Murray Flats. He used to bring us vegetables from his own garden. He had many talents. He was also a hunter and fisherman and sometimes brought us fish from the river, kangaroo steak and rabbits. He repaired different things in the house that had broken and actually made a whole new meat safe for us. He was a real handyman. Although he came to our place for many years, he only brought his wife on two occasions. The accommodation would have been pretty inconvenient for her.

I remember one period of time when Ed was away with sheep and I had to harness the horse and buggy to drive with the children to get the cows from miles away. We were caught in a swarm of bees and one stung the baby, Cedric, on the eye which swelled up to the size of an egg. There was no phone and no doctor, so I bathed it with a blue bag and blued his whole eye. In a few days the swelling went down.

Soon after I came home from hospital with my youngest son, John, Gloria disappeared into the cockychaff shed where she found a nest of eggs the maid had apparently overlooked. She then fancied cracking them and tasting them, which resulted in a dense coating of yellow all over her pretty dress and face. It still amuses me when I remember what she looked like. She often disappeared. On a very windy day I saw her running towards the dam and I had to struggle against the wind to reach her before she drowned. Another time I discovered her out in the paddock in all the dust near to where her father was ploughing with the horses. So it was definitely time to start her on correspondence lessons so she could be with me, well occupied.

I was the correspondence teacher for each of our children until they were seven years old as they were too young to walk to school before that. We enjoyed it. The children got good results and there were pleasing remarks about their work from the Principal of the Correspondence school. He congratulated me and said that I should be a school teacher. In later years the youngest of my children, John, became a high school teacher. As I was gathering eggs with the children I made them count the eggs and count the sticks for morning wood. As I did my work they learnt by my side. I can still see them walking around with me doing and learning all the while. When Gloria finished Grade Four the teacher wouldn't promote her because he didn't want to teach an extra grade. I felt that this was most unfair. He did exactly the same with Cedric, who was then in the same class as John. Actually, John used to do the same school work as Cedric when I was teaching him Correspondence lessons. John was always very eager to learn.

After school one stormy day, the teacher asked Malcolm to take a note to our neighbour, Eddie Steinert on his way home. Malcolm had to go quite some distance out of his way to do this and because of the wild weather he had to push his bike against, he became utterly exhausted. We were quite worried about his welfare because he was so late home, and when he did eventually arrive he collapsed by the fireplace from exhaustion. I felt it was most unfair of the teacher to ask Malcolm to do that. Malcolm, though, was such a willing boy.

There was always an end of year concert, a Christmas concert, at the Stonefield Primary School and the Zwar children always sang. I particularly remember Malcolm getting up on stage on his own and singing when he was about eleven. He had a little navy suit on and he sang beautifully. That same night John was playing the organ and he was disappointed that I didn't make a fuss of him like I did of Malcolm earlier. But although I'd known he would be playing I didn't see him from where I was sitting.

When Gloria was in Grade Three she learnt to ride a bike to school, and she took Malcolm on the parcel carrier until he was old enough to ride his own bike. Then Gloria and Malcolm took Cedric and John when they were ready to go to school. In spring time the magpies used to swoop on the children as they rode to school. They especially picked on Cedric, for some reason.

Droughts, Floods and Storms

The times of drought could be so severe that there wouldn't be a blade of grass in the paddocks or on the roadside. At one time I was so distraught by it all that I cried out to God in prayer for instant help as we were at our wits' end and didn't know what to do anymore. The sheep were getting skinnier and hand feeding was not enough. That evening it started to rain. Soon the green feed began showing through and what a delight for man and beast who were all worn out from sheer exhaustion.

We dealt with shocking droughts, interspersed at times with abundant rain, so that the countryside looked like paradise. Clover would be knee high in the paddocks where the creek would run and we could reap 6 – 8 bags to the acre of wheat. A downside to the abundant clover was the cows bloating to such an extent that I'd have to get up at night to push a boom handle down their throats to expel the gas. But I can't remember ever losing any cows to bloat. When we had good rains, grass and clover grew everywhere, even in the yard. I cut and pulled it up late in the evenings to clear the yard and make it look nice and tidy. I filled in a nice sized shed of it and was quite pleased that it dried off looking nice and green.



Pine creek in flood – Eddie & Gloria with the three boys

I remember one really bad flood which Ed was caught in at the farthest end of the paddock down on the bottom road. The ute stopped, so he walked home two and a half miles to get me and the tractor. I didn't like the idea, as I don't like water all around me. He hitched the ute onto the tractor and drove us home, with me steering the ute. The water was both sides of the road and I was so frightened that my clothes became saturated from perspiration. When we came to the big dam at the gate, I tried to persuade Ed to drive to the next gate, as the dam bank was slippery and I didn't want to slip into a dam full of water. But no, he wouldn't listen, and as we drove through the gateway I put my foot on the brake and burst the chain. Ed didn't notice and drove on up to the house. I got a dressing down when he came back, but after we hitched up again he towed me home – through the other gate!

When Ed brought me home from hospital after John was born, the creek was in flood, so we drove around the bottom road and in that gate. The ute stalled and we had to walk two miles home carrying cases, children and new baby. That was such a long walk and the night was closing in on us.

On the 24th January 1941 a big flood occurred, which happened just after a severe drought when there was very little cover on the ground. Early that morning Mum, Dad and Dick called at our place as the men wanted to go to Ed Weckert's clearing sale about ten miles away. It was a calm morning when they left, dry and dusty, but the weather later turned very humid and began to look threatening. Before the day was out it was pouring with rain. Mum and I were both really worried as the men weren't home by sundown and there was water everywhere. It was midnight before they turned up. They were just able to cross the flooded creeks, one pulling the other out. The car stopped at Stonefield so they left it there till the next day and waded home in the pitch dark three miles through the water. We were so pleased to see them. Ed was worried about our sheep as they were our only source of income. He prayed earnestly for God to save them as we were just starting out in our married life with a young family and they were our livelihood. Next day, anxious to see what was left, the men went out to find the sheep. They discovered them on a small rise around the butt of a tree with some stuck in the mud. So the dreaded task of pulling them out began. What a job! The sheep were very weak as you can imagine and they were covered with heavy mud. But they all recovered. Five inches of rain fell at Stonefield on that day and the flood waters ran through the house yard and the sheds but fortunately not into the house, which was built on a slight rise. All

the dams were filled and water flowed through all the paddocks which later looked like paradise when the feed grew.

These major floods eventually caused a change in the watercourse through our property, and instead of the water running out onto the farm it took a short cut across the farm towards the Sturt Highway, undermining fences and deepening a gutter parallel to the road. Ed and I built a bank to restore the water to its original course, so that it flooded back to the dam on the north east of our property. We had to do this using a team of six or so horses and a buck scraper. Periodically this bank washed away and had to be repaired. In the early 1950's the manager of Portee Station wanted the water to run down Wild Dog Creek, adjacent to the Sturt Highway, to Halfway House where they had put a roadhouse. They wanted their dam filled as well as the large government dam a little further east. (*The roadhouse was set up in the historic Annadale Hotel building constructed in 1857 –ed. note*). Ed had contoured much of the farm to maximize any water that flowed during flood times, and when he was told that these had to be destroyed this caused terrific strain and heartache to the family. However Eddie did not give up easily. He contacted a variety of people in authority including local politicians. Sir Alec Downer became involved in the case and visited our property with his wife. We received Christmas cards from the Downers each year until Sir Alec died. Eventually, the Attorney General of South Australia, Colin Rowe, intervened and gave permission for washaway repairs to be reinstated.

On 8th November 1951 we had a particularly harrowing storm at Stonefield, memorable in both its ferocity and the damage it did. Malcolm had stayed home from school that day because he didn't feel well. This in itself was unusual because it was a very rare occasion when any of the children missed school because of illness. During the day a wind blew up creating a severe dust storm. In this storm Eddie went out with Malcolm to check on the roof of the big shed, as he was concerned about its safety. Earlier he and I had tied a large rope across the roof and secured it to a post on the western side. When I went outside to call Ed and Malcolm to lunch I was horrified by the eerie blackness of the sky to the west and feared for their safety. I screamed for them to leave what they were doing and shelter inside.

Malcolm sought protection west of the shed, while Ed and I ran with the storm back towards the house. I had nearly reached the western wall of the old kitchen when I saw the whole roof of the shed lift off, turn up in the sky and then individual sheets of iron rain down. I saw one sheet between the sky and Ed and could no longer bear to look as it struck him. Just before he was struck he was standing looking up with his arms raised. I ducked behind the old kitchen, then ran into the house as sheets of iron fell and were blown along. I received a bad gash to my thigh, when a sheet of iron hit me, cutting through my clothes and inflicting a large double wound just before I entered the house.

Malcolm had watched the whole ghastly scene from where he had been sheltering. He also saw the huge sugar gum tree next to the shed twist around and fall to the ground at the same time as the shed roof lifted up into the sky. When he got to his father, he was quite sure he was dead. What a shocking thing for an eleven year old boy to have to witness.

I ran out of the house to Ed, and then Malcolm and I somehow managed to lift him up and walk him inside. He was very dazed and wanted to get outside again to see what could be done about the damage, but his head was bleeding badly from a large gash on the top of his skull. His brain had been almost exposed by the edge of the sheet of iron – a miracle that he wasn't killed.

I wrote a note for Malcolm to take to the Stonefield post mistress so that help and a doctor could be summoned. Malcolm locked the door to stop Ed from going outside – he was deliriously determined to investigate the damage – and headed off in the strong wind to walk the three miles to

Stonefield. On the way he was overtaken by the Dry Creek Plaster Company truck. The driver, Len Kroschel, and his brother picked him up and Malcolm, who was too exhausted to speak, just handed him the note I had written. It was very fortunate that the driver had decided to drive past our farm instead of his usual route – there were probably too many trees down on his usual road. The post mistress had difficulty getting through to the doctor because of damage to the phone lines, but eventually the doctor arrived, summoned we don't know how. In the meantime Len Kroschel with Malcolm had brought Cedric and John home from school. Because of the children, I decided not to show the doctor the wound on my thigh, as I was needed at home to look after them. The doctor took Ed with him to Angaston Hospital where he had 13 stitches in his head. He discharged himself from there and Bert Wood took him to the Willows Hospital where they discovered he had a broken collar bone. He came home with his arm in a sling and Gloria, with the aid of our neighbour Mr Gottie Löffler, reaped the crop of wheat. He was most impressed with Gloria, and said she worked as well as any man.

As well as the devastation outside, the house inside was a disaster. Sheets of iron from the verandah were hanging down and swinging and we had to dodge them to gain entry into the kitchen. Some chimney bricks had fallen down onto the stove, knocking the kettle right across the floor and there was a layer of dust about an inch thick over everything. What a mess to clean up!

The morning after the storm I had a visit from the local Lutheran Church minister, Pastor Briar, and his wife as well as Pastor R B Reuther and his wife from our Gruenberg Church. They prayed for our well being, and were quite a comfort to us.

Some years later, returning home from Gloria's wedding on 27th April 1963 we came across our creek in flood and barely got through before the car stopped. We all had to get onto the bonnet and jump out over the water, so I took off my dainty wedding shoes and stockings. We all walked home across the paddocks. Water was everywhere. It was soon after this episode that the council built a concrete ford where the road crossed the creek.

Snakes

When we first lived at Stonefield we had no water in our house. Ed brought a pipe from the tank through the wall and put a tap on the end. It was a real treat to have running water inside. Under the tap which was quite low, he dug out a hole so that a bucket could fit there. Water spilt into the hole at times. One morning very early I walked in to fetch some water. I couldn't see very well, as there was no electric light to switch on. I saw something in the water which at first I thought was a stick of rhubarb. I nearly grabbed it, but instead, lit a match and discovered it was a white snake. I still shudder to think of it. I got the fire prongs, took it out and killed it. After that I killed 10 snakes over the years around the house. They terrified me, but because of the children's safety I had to do it.

One day my mother came to visit me. Ed was not at home and I was chopping wood. My mother was picking the wood up for me and suddenly she screamed. I had cut a snake in half!

The laundry was a lean to made of iron with a copper in it. Once I walked in to drop something into the copper and a snake came crawling out. I grabbed the pitch fork which was luckily left under the verandah, told the children to stay in the house, and swiped the snake dead just as it was getting through a hole into the house. I was quite wet with perspiration by then.

Another day while I was feeding the fowls and pigeons, I saw a snake in the pigeon shed swallowing a whole pigeon. I was absolutely amazed at how its mouth could stretch so much. I killed that snake too.

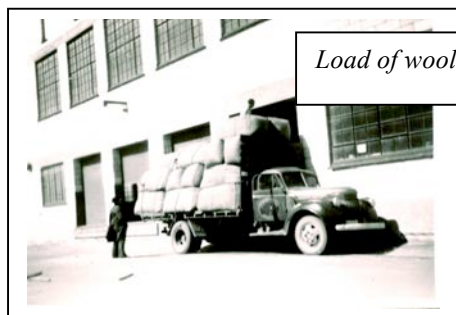
There is one more snake story I must tell you. We always had dust at Stonefield, especially in the passage where we had a large sideboard. Ed went out during the night and while he was outside I heard something flop onto the floor. The next day I saw a snake track in the dust along the sideboard and wriggling out through the door.

Life at Stonefield

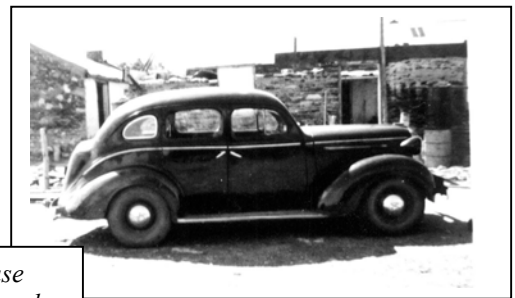
When shearing time was on in my first sixteen years of marriage I helped my husband. I threw, skirted and classed the fleeces as well as making the lunches. When the children came I put the baby in the pram and took her or him along to the woolshed too. My husband was not a big shearer at first, about 30 sheep for a start, but we were proud of our efforts. There were no machines – it was all hand blades. Of course we had to fit in the milking and feeding the stock. Then after tea when the children were asleep we'd creep out to pack the fleeces until about 10 o'clock when we would drop dead into bed. The children would always wake us up early in the morning.

We started our shearing in a little old shed which I quite enjoyed as I was working together with Eddie. When we eventually got other shearers in to help, Ben Klingner and Arthur Krollig, that kept me on the hop, for I had to also get lunches and morning and afternoon tea! We always had proper meals with desserts to follow. We had a plentiful supply of groceries, buying up large quantities before shearing to see us through. When Malcolm turned 14 and left school I was asked to keep out of the woolshed altogether, which seemed like a slap in the face for me. I felt hurt. This shows how much I enjoyed working with soft wool, despite feeling like lead late at night after baling up in order to have more room in the small shed we had. Later Ed built a beautiful new shed, most of it by himself with some help from the boys when they'd grown up more. He worked hard to get the sheep yards organised and also built a very well constructed wool table which he was very proud of.

When shearing was over we would cart the wool away to Port Adelaide and that was a holiday. Once when we arrived at Goldsborough Mort to deliver it, the load almost tipped into their huge door as we were on a slope. We were very glad we got there safely. We always had lunch there and enjoyed it very much. This was about 70 miles from home.



Load of wool at GM Pt Adelaide



1938 Desoto with house extensions in background

As our family grew, our home was getting smaller, and we needed more space. My husband carted stone from Accommodation Hill and started in 1954, with our sons' help, to enlarge the house. When the walls were about four feet high, it rained so heavily that there was about two feet of water through the area. So we had to walk on planks into the kitchen for days on end. When it dried out we got wind and dust instead. It was the time that Cedric and John were to be confirmed. Gloria was a great help to me at this time. We had quite a few people coming home for lunch as there were two sets of sponsors as well as other friends and relatives. Everything was set up nicely within the walls of our new extensions, but it got windy so we had to take up the sides of the table cloths to cover everything. I had the meal organised on the wood stove by the time we went to church at Stonefield, and when we got back it was nicely cooked. After all my anxiety we had a lovely day.

We eventually had a lovely big lounge and dinette added as well as a separator room, a bathroom and a new outside toilet. Unbeknown to me, part of the reason Eddie built the new rooms was to store wheat in them. Luckily I went and bought a new lounge suite and carpet square from Nuriootpa and placed them in there before he had a chance to put bags of wheat inside! When Cedric was about sixteen or seventeen he built a fence around the new rooms to keep the cattle away from the house. I thought he did a really good job. I tried to grow flowers from the hand basin water. Nothing was wasted. In good years when the dams were filled with water we grew some lovely vegetables. Water was pumped out of the dam by a Douglas hand pump into pipes and to the rows of vegetables. God rewarded our meagre efforts in everything. However, Eddie tried for many years to establish an orchard – especially almond trees – north of the house and he'd cart water from the dam in 44 gallon drums using a horse and trolley. But in the end the trees all died. I remember one year I had a nice square of double purple stocks growing. I also grew a row of Athol trees and I kept the cream cool in their shade. The cream was kept in five gallon cans, too big to put in the fridge. The cream man called once a week to pick up our cream and eggs. He collected cream and eggs from the whole areas. One hot summer's day (a real heatwave) we received nothing for all our efforts as everything had gone bad on the truck in the hot sun with no refrigeration.

We could keep thirty dozen eggs in one box – sometimes it was full, other times we had hardly any to sell. I had a fridge in the house run by kerosene. But it always created fumes. We should have had an exhaust pipe from the kitchen to get rid of them.

When we were first married we depended on a horse and buggy for transport, but later we bought a second hand ute, a grey 1923 Dodge Buckboard. Eddie broke his nose trying to crank start it and it backfired on him. He then asked Gloria to start it for him. We all enjoyed driving to church and Sunday School, either 11 miles to Truro or 18 miles to Gruenberg, so that we could visit my parents at Moculta. Because the family was growing, we couldn't expect them to always sit at the back of the ute, so Eddie bought a big black DeSoto. I used to practise my driving with that car. The first time I drove it, I felt quite proud of being able to manoeuvre it through the gate posts and use appropriate hand signals. But I forgot how to stop it. Luckily it glided to a halt just by the clothes line. Eddie wasn't much good at teaching – he didn't have the art – so Cedric taught me. I was getting on fine until Cedric left home and got married, and I lost my teacher. One time we were all sitting in the car ready to go to church and Eddie stated that the car wouldn't go. When I asked if he'd turned the key on, he realised he hadn't done so! At some stage we bought a green Chev ute which I really liked.



The 1948 Stylemaster Chev ute

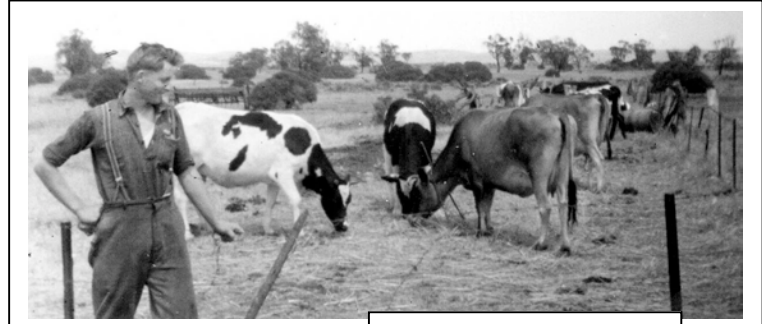
Eddie used to use horses for his farm work, but eventually he bought a large red tractor. He also bought a truck which certainly had to do plenty of work. I used to practise driving the truck around the yards and paddocks and sometimes felt it was a miracle that I didn't hit the gate post. I always found the gears of the truck very difficult to manage.

Our children were very well behaved and enjoyed helping on the farm. When Ed was away minding sheep on the roads, the more they woke crying at night the safer I felt, as I was sure the noise would

frighten any prowlers away. Usually, one child would wake up the others and then I'd have quite an orchestra. No wonder they all became lovely singers! Eddie always insisted that the children did the washing up at night so that I could have a break after my hard day's work. While I was preparing breakfast in the mornings the children milked the cows – but at night I usually milked. The children had their own special cows to milk. Cedric milked cows the longest because he stayed at home with us longer than the other children.



*Alma's cows with the horses,
Biddy & Violet drinking at the
"middle dam"*



Cedric feeding the cows

Gloria left home soon after she turned fourteen and was in demand as a house help. The main place she worked at was a place called "Kingscourt", owned by the Nichols family in Eudunda where she stayed for about 12 months. (*The Nichols boys were noted Norwood footballers –ed. note*)

This place was a bit like Shannons where I worked, and, similarly to me, Gloria enjoyed her time there. Before Gloria left home I ensured she knew how to bake a cake and sew. Of course she could also milk cows! Gloria left Nichols when she was 17 and worked at the canneries where she met Blue (Raymond) Leno who also worked there. She lived with friends of ours, Fritz and Annie Fromm, then when she was 19 she stayed with my sister Linda for about four years, during which time she began going out with Blue. About six months before her marriage she bought a little home in Fourth Street for 2,000 pounds and sold it within six months for 2,500 – Blue had done a lot of work renovating it. They bought land in Corella Street and stayed with Blue's parents until their house was built in February 1964.

Although we always had to struggle, our health was generally good, because the family ate good, simple home-grown country food. God was always there as our healer if things went wrong. Once, when Eddie and Malcolm were in Keith, Cedric, still a teenager, was harrowing the land preparing it for seeding. As he was scraping grass out of the harrows he was bitten by a snake. When he came running into the house I suggested that we pray first to ask God to stop the poison going further up his arm – by that time there was a three inch red streak showing. I bathed it in very hot water with Jasol B in it, and bandaged his arm tightly. Cedric was grateful, but still insistent on driving to Nuriootpa to see a doctor. I kept praying, asking for a miracle. When Cedric returned he said he couldn't find a doctor anywhere in Nuriootpa, but he felt fine.

Once Ed, Cedric and I were heading off, to Adelaide to sell wool I think, in our red truck when we noticed a strange blue Holden with three people in it driving slowly down the road towards Stonefield and looking hard at us. We stopped to check whether they were going to drive into our farm, but when they drove past our gate we continued on our way. On our return home Ed discovered our house had been broken into. Our writing desk (I still have this beautiful desk in my bedroom) was broken open and all our money – about 300 pounds – had been stolen. Although we lost lots of our treasured items, the choicest thing I missed was my lovely golden bracelet, given to

me by my beloved. We notified the police who later caught the culprits in Burra, two young men and a girl of 16 or so. Sargeant Draper from Adelaide drove Cedric and me to Burra to testify in court. The robbers had spent much of the money they'd stolen, and one of the men was happy to hand everything back. The other, however, had bought a black coat with silver buttons which he refused to part with. Although many of our possessions were returned to us, I never saw my beautiful bracelet again – the girl said she'd given it to her mother for Mothers' Day. Apparently, after we saw them on the Stonefield Road, they'd driven on into Stonefield where they'd had breakfast on the lawn in front of our minister's house. They then returned to our farm where the girl lay on Gloria's bed reading her comics while the men ransacked our home. On our return from Burra to Stonefield with the police, they got lost and we only arrived home at 1 am after a very long, tiring day.

Mr Graetz, an acquaintance of ours, told Eddie he should leave Stonefield because he could see I was suffering, and he knew of country in the south east that would suit us better. We got in touch with Goldsboroughs and Jeff Tidswell told us about land at Keith that was for sale and how to get there. Eddie drove down in the DeSoto have a look. I packed enough food to last for several days, so he wouldn't starve. When he was nearly there he asked directions from the Vorwerk family and they kept him at their home overnight and fed him, so he had no need for my food. They were so kind to him, even though they were strangers. Vorworks showed him the land and gave him advice. I later went down for a look with Eddie and Malcolm, and I cried and thought "not *another* old house". Gloria stayed home and looked after Cedric and John. I was concerned about leaving Gloria with such responsibility, but she managed very well and we returned home to find everything nice and tidy. It was only later that I found surplus things hidden in the next room behind the door!

Jeff Tidswell drove Eddie down for the auction and we bought the land in November 1952. My husband stayed there quite often and batched in an old homestead built in 1910 and almost in ruins. It was a terrible old place. Snakes were a real problem in the summer, as they crawled in and out of the cracks in the wall. Eddie dug down by hand and made a well so that he could get water. He battled and worked really hard to put up fences, and built four rooms from Mt Gambier stone to camp in at their farm near the Emu Flat road. Malcolm and Eddie carted the stone themselves from Mt Gambier (Eddie gave himself ruptures from carrying this heavy stone). After thieves stole some of the stone they decided they would have to shift to the old homestead site and this is the stone that both Malcolm and Cedric used for various building projects later. When our oldest son, Malcolm, was 17 he used to stay there with his Dad for weeks, and Cedric and I kept the home fires burning. Later Malcolm and Cedric were each given half the land at Keith. John stayed on at school, then studied to be a teacher at Adelaide Teachers College and University. We had worked very hard, denying ourselves any luxuries and saving every penny so that we could give our children a start financially. But it was worth it when we saw how they also worked hard and progressed in leaps and bounds. John, a deputy principal at Penola High School, also bought himself a small farm, bored for water as the other two boys did, and irrigated as they did, and planted trees all around the farm. His land didn't have many trees, whereas Malcolm and Cedric's was mostly bush and had to be cleared for sowing crops and lucerne. Gloria took care of other people's babies while their mothers went out to work, as well as caring for her own three children. She then became a teachers' aid at Nuriootpa Primary School where she was loved by all the children.

After the children left home there was no one to give Ed a hand any more on the land, so I lovingly took my place again by his side. I could drive the tractor around the paddock for seeding etc, to give him a break in the cold weather. One time we were carting hay and Ed was at the back of the truck stacking the bales as they came up the elevator which was attached to the side of the truck. I was driving. All went well until suddenly smoke billowed from the engine. I had the presence of mind to switch off the motor for which I received praise – the first time I'd ever been praised for anything connected with my driving. However, it had already caught fire, so we took coats and cushions to try to choke the flames. One of the cushions had feathers in it and they flew in all directions. With

ripening crops on both sides, had they caught the fire would have spread uncontrollably as everything was tinder dry. Luckily we managed to control the flames and the truck was later repaired. The gears were awfully hard for me to work on that old truck but we loved it. It was ours and we needed it for everything. This was the last year I helped with the hay, as our sons then came home on the weekends to help, especially John who sometimes brought other teachers along and they carted in a terrific lot.

Life After Stonefield

When Eddie turned 70 the police would no longer renew his truck licence which meant we had to sell the farm. This was heart breaking when we had to shift from the home we loved that had housed us for 38 years. When I was preparing to leave, I dared not think about the move but just kept working. I washed all the floors just before we left, to thank the lovely house that had protected us for so long.

We came to Nuriootpa in 1975, shifting into a large home with extensive grounds on the outskirts of the town. We thought that Eddie would be happy here, with plenty to occupy him. I had been a guild member at Stonefield for many years and secretary for three years, and I joined the guild at Nuri. I served Meals on Wheels to people in need. Ed would drive me half way to Angaston to Mrs. Severin, my driver, and from there we would collect the meals from Angaston Hospital. It was nice meeting new people and many I delivered meals to were younger than I was. I also joined the St Petri Singers and still derive much pleasure from our weekly practises each Monday and regular outings to sing for rest homes and whoever else asks us. We've done a lot of travelling around, from as far afield as Waikerie and Loxton, through to Mannum and Adelaide. I also spent time walking, especially to singing rehearsals each Monday.



Alma with the St Petri Singers at the conclusion of a concert

Since we shifted to Nuriootpa I have enjoyed photography, especially around our home and garden, and have albums full of flowers which I love. Ed looked after the vegetable garden and I kept the lawn and yard mowed, which was good exercise for me. I liked doing it as I could see something for what I'd done. Ed had a small flock of sheep to help keep down the grass on the acre or so of land attached to the house, and we still kept our faithful sheep dog, Shep. Either Malcolm or Cedric would shear the sheep and tend to their needs when they would come to visit us. One night I heard a dog barking and next morning discovered two sheep dead. We never reported it – perhaps we should have.

A regret I've had since shifting to Nuriootpa is how the food I cook no longer has the same flavour as food on the farm. My chicken noodle soup was unbeatable, made with farm chickens, but I can't get the same flavour with bought chickens. Similarly, farm milk, cream and butter had a special taste which I can't find again in shops or supermarkets. It was such a lovely flavour, I can't explain it on paper, but it makes me long to taste it now as I jot this down. I had a simple way with fish, just broiled with water and a little salt. When tender I added fresh cream and pepper. It was delicious.

In August 1987 Ed and I celebrated our Golden Wedding. We had a very memorable service at Gruenberg Church when Pastor Cedric Zweck officiated. We were also very thankful for the golden flowers on the altar and the special arrangement made as a gift to us to further admire at home. The family and some close friends afterwards drove to Marananga Tea Rooms for lunch. All our children and all but two grandchildren were also present.



Golden wedding celebrated at Marananga Tea Rooms (Family gathering organised by Gloria)



Ed at Fiona's wedding in 1988

Due to a build up of fluid, especially in his legs, Ed had to have a pacemaker inserted when he was in his early 80s. The first one only lasted three months and he had to have another one put in which was successful. The double operation caused him a great deal of pain and distress. His health gradually declined until I was unable to look after him and in 1988 he was admitted to the Nuriootpa Nursing Home, where he passed away on 13th August 1991. I was able to spend time with him there most days when I would wheel him out amongst the trees and enjoy a cup of tea and sandwiches with him.

My family was concerned about me living on my own in our large Nuriootpa home and eventually they persuaded me to sell the house and shift into a new unit adjoining my sister, Linda, which I did in March 1995. Gloria was a great help to me in setting up my new home and organising all the attractive soft furnishings. I am now within easy walking distance of St. Petri church and general shopping, as well as having the company of my sister Linda next door. Sister Ivy & Keith live in the next street. Gloria & Ray are only a short distance away and granddaughter Carolyn & Blair at Greenock are not far away. I enjoy visits from my boys and their families on a fairly regular basis.

As I write this I am 94 years old. I praise and thank God for the joy I have in my old age. I am happy because of my Lord and Saviour who has given me so many blessings throughout my life. It is good to be young, but I enjoy old age too, immensely. I enjoy my family as I did all my life. I love God's promises and look forward to where my Lord leads and guides.

Additional photographs (not in any order)



*3 sisters (Linda, Alma, Ivy)
under the arch in the front
garden at home (Duck
Ponds)*



*Alma with other Godparents (Albert Presser &
Vera Codrington) on Evon's Confirmation Day*



*Malcolm & Gloria at Stonefield
(good crop!!!!)*



Malcolm & John



Late 1940s



Violet, the dray & John



Gloria's Confirmation (1951)



Alma & cousin Lena photographed together by their boss, Arnold Fechner, who had just taken them for a ride in his new car



Group of relatives preparing to visit the Gary Schliebs family at Coonalpyn in Bert Wood's Ford bus (Selma in black, Alma 2nd from right)



Treskowthick workers have fun in the fire cart (Alma front centre)



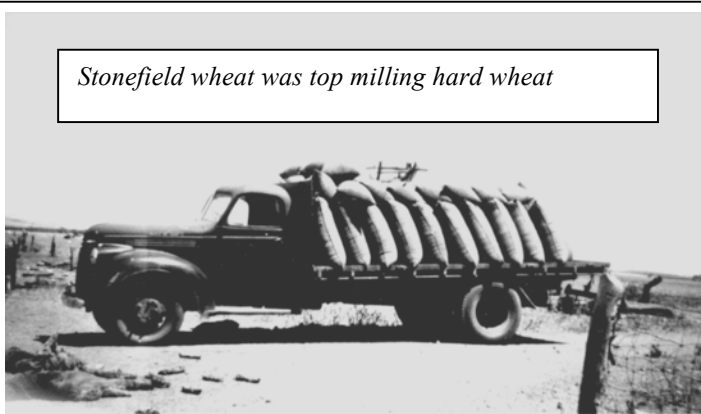
Alma as bridesmaid for Marie Blesing (Ed's sister)



Ed as best man



The four Zwar children in the late 1940s



Stonefield wheat was top milling hard wheat



Rare photos of the six Schliebs children (above) & their partners (right) taken at Lenos in 1977 for Ed Zwar's 75th



Cousins at Lenos



Alma & Eddie enjoying a day out in the late '50s



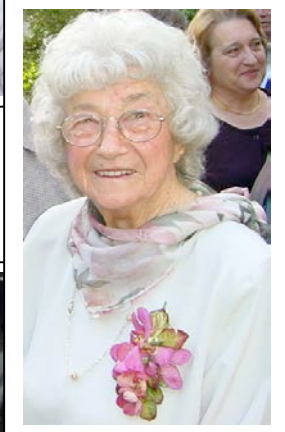
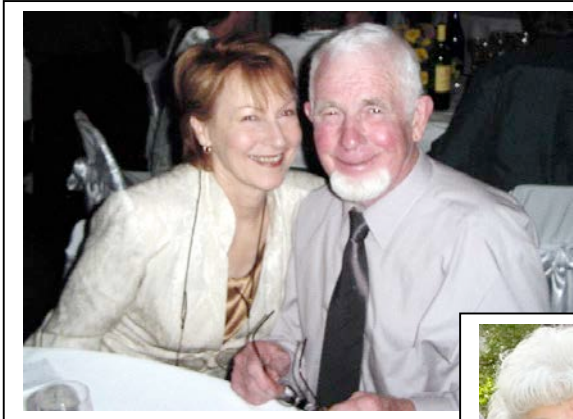
At wedding reception of Gloria & Raymond Leno April 1963



Zwar family at John's wedding Dec 1966



Zwar family at Cedric's Wedding September 1969



The Zwar family at the wedding of Joanna & Andrew April 2001



Zwar family at Alma's 93rd birthday celebration in 2001