

**KALAMUNDA & DISTRICTS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ORAL HISTORIES**

A MEMOIR OF

MRS DORIS MYNORS - NEE PALMER





Doris Palmer, Perth, Circa 1932

'We had the brook running through our property. Each summer my brothers would get rocks and manure bags and they would dam up the creek. That would become a swimming hole'.

DORIS MYNORS

SEPTEMBER 2014

Doris Mynors (nee Palmer), Circa 2014



An interview of Doris Mynors (nee Palmer) was conducted by Jeanette Achurch, 1 September 2014 on behalf of the Kalamunda and Districts Historical Society.

This summary of the original interview was prepared on behalf of the Bill Shaw Oral History Group.



Back: Les, Reg and Len Gilchrist, Front: Evelyn, Granddad, Grandma and Ruby Gilchrist, Circa 1916



Evelyn Gilchrist (Doris's Mum)

Doris Palmer was born at King Edward Memorial Hospital in Subiaco on 21 June 1931.

Her paternal grandfather, Walter Palmer, migrated from England when he was 21. He wrote to his family to let them know that he had arrived safely but he never contacted them again. He married Elizabeth Jones whose family came from Ireland and owned a vineyard in Caversham.

Walter and his cousin, John Moffat, worked for the Roads Board and were asked to give a name to a road that they had built. They named it Pomeroy after a little village in Ireland.

Walter's twin son and daughter lit a fire and their house burned down so he had to rebuild the family home. He built a little stone cottage in Welshpool Road, Lesmurdie.

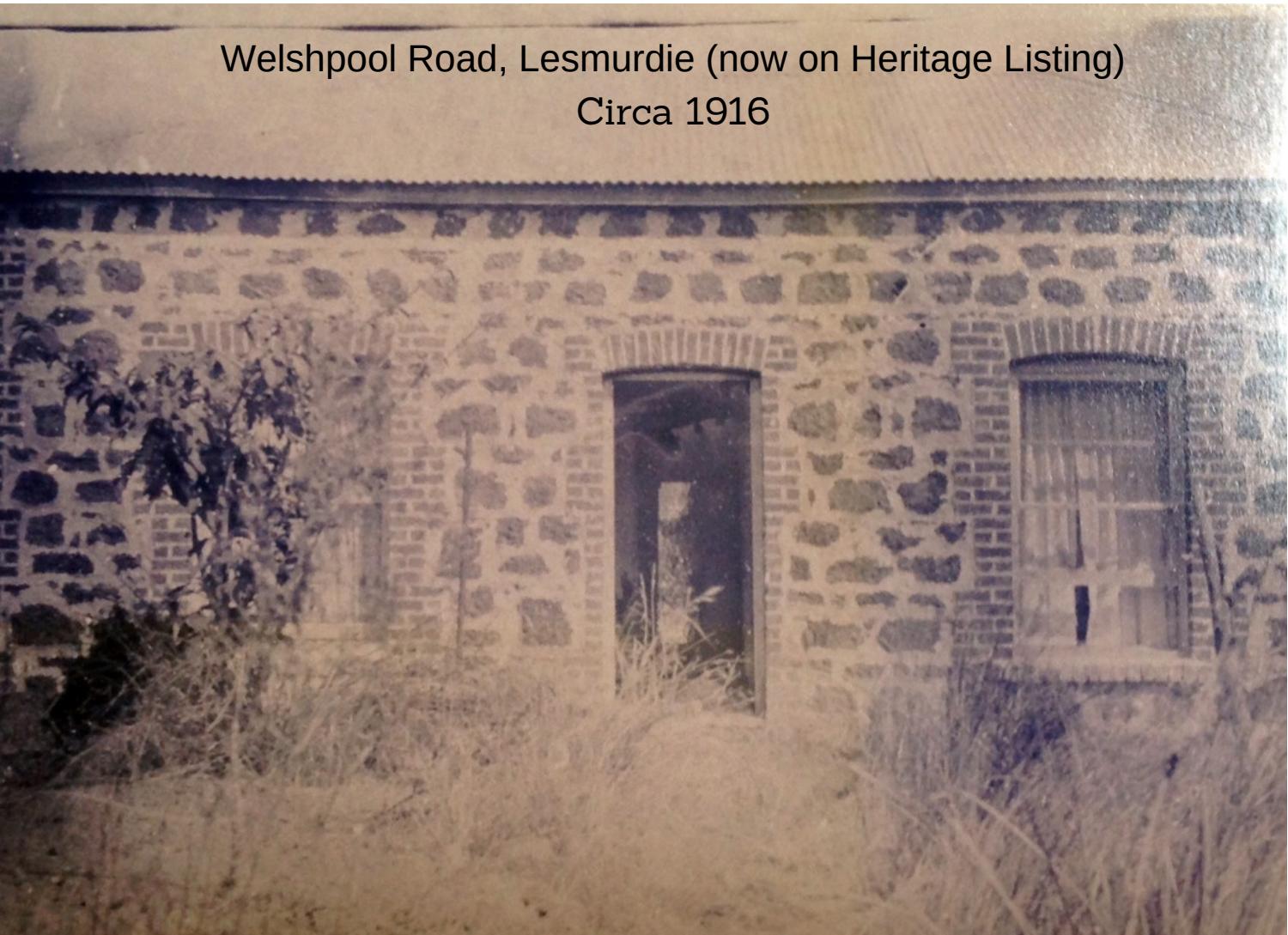
Doris' maternal grandparents were from England. Her mother, Evelyn Gilchrist, married her father Walter Henry Palmer in 1921. Doris was one of nine children with five brothers and three sisters.

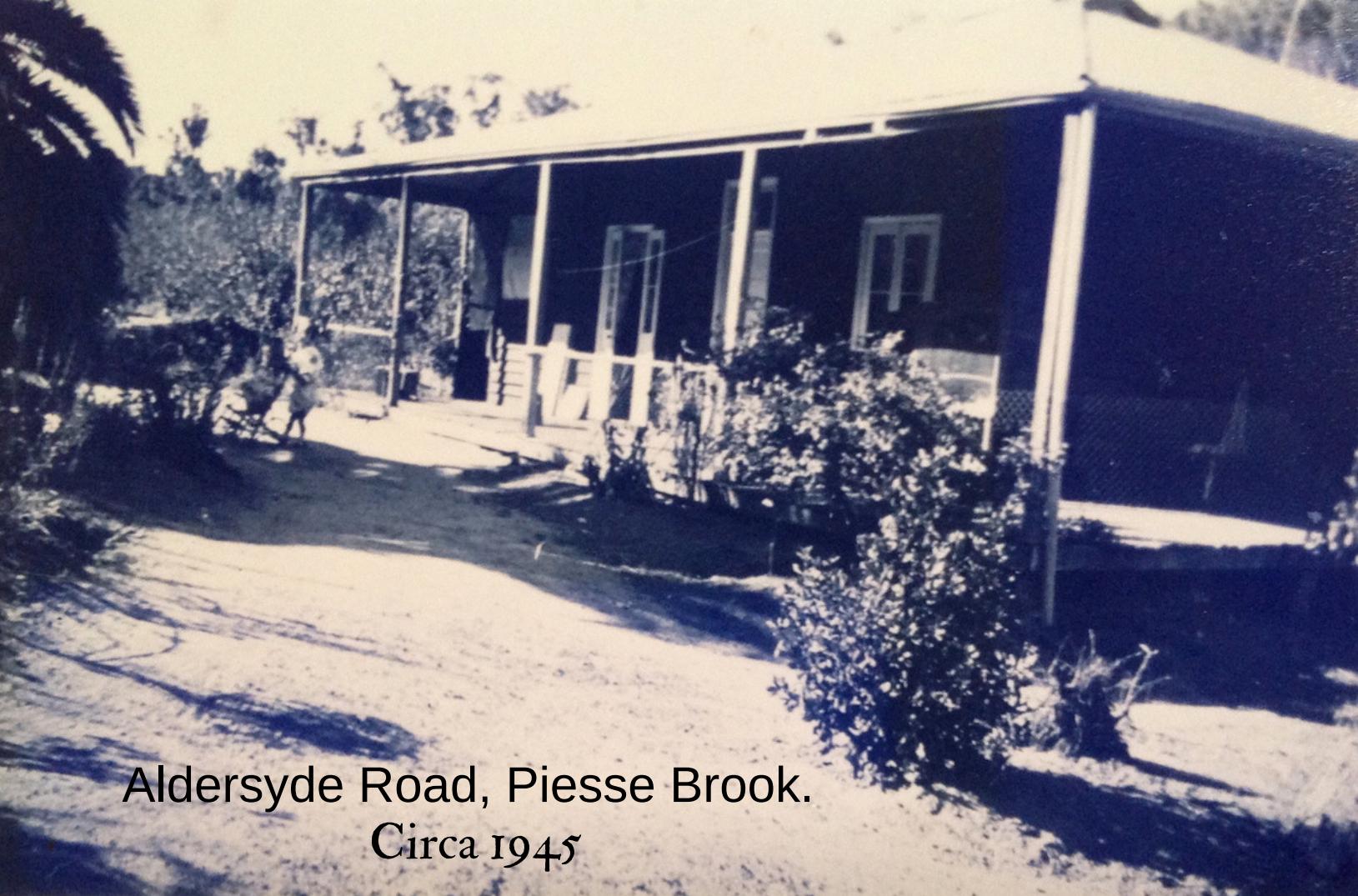
Evelyn Gilchrist and Walter Henry Palmers' wedding, 23 April 1921



'POMEROY' BRICK COTTAGE

Welshpool Road, Lesmurdie (now on Heritage Listing)
Circa 1916





Aldersyde Road, Piesse Brook.
Circa 1945



Walter Palmer and Evelyn Gilchrist, Clearing Aldersyde Road, Piesse Brook, circa 1920

Palmer's home

Doris' father served in the army during the war. Suffering from meningitis in Gallipoli or Egypt he was discharged and subsequently sent home. He later rejoined the army serving his country further in France and Belgium.

Upon his return from war he was given ten acres of land in Piesse Brook under the Soldier's Settlement Scheme. He built the Aldersyde Road family home, with the help of Doris' grandfather, but initially lived in an old shed on the property until he married Evelyn.

The house was built of weatherboard and asbestos with a tin roof. It had a kitchen, lounge and two bedrooms. The verandah wrapped around three sides of the house with a bathroom on one end. In later years the verandah was enclosed at one end to create another bedroom. This room was rented to Miss Elliott, the first school teacher of the Piesse Brook Primary School.

Doris' father was instrumental in building the school which opened in 1928. When Miss Elliott arrived there was no furniture, only builders rubbish. Doris' Mum and Mrs Bateman cleaned up while Doris' father and Mr Bateman took the horse and cart to Kalamunda to collect the furniture. In the 1960s the school was converted into a youth hostel and finally demolished in 1996.

After the war Doris' Uncle Alan was engaged to a school teacher in Walliston whom he visited regularly. On one visit he told his younger brother, who had dropped him off, 'Don't hang around lad, it's going to be a while,' he flipped his brother a coin and said, 'Thanks cabby'. He was never seen again by his family and it was later discovered that he took another officer's name and became Alan Pearce instead of Alan Palmer.



Opening of Piesse Brook Primary School.
Circa 1928



Walter and Alan Palmer. Circa 1915



Aldersyde Road, Piesse Brook. Walter Palmer and one of the boys in front of corn crop.

Younger years

Doris had just started school at the age of six when her father died. He was about 43 years of age when he contracted septicaemia. He cut himself with a sickle while working in the stables and the wound became infected. He walked to Kalamunda to see the doctor and walked home again before being transported to Royal Perth Hospital where he later died. Evelyn was left a widow with nine children, the youngest just two months old so her brother came to live with her to help out.

Before his death Doris and her father would stand at the clothes line at night and he would teach her about the stars. She also fondly remembers seeing him in his hat and grey shirt standing alongside the fence where he was working.

All the children went to school at Piesse Brook Primary School which had one room with a fireplace and a partly enclosed small verandah with a water tank at the end. Doris rode a hand-me-down bike to school. One teacher taught about twenty infants. There were several teachers over the years but she remembers Mrs Peacock who caned her brother every day except his birthday. Doris was also caned once when she was caught smoking.

Lunch was homemade bread with cheese, vegemite or jam. Her mother would make Plum Duffs and Jam Roly-poly's. The children played a variety of games at home including Ludo, Monopoly, Bridge, Strip Jack Naked and Euchre.



Walter and Evelyn Palmer with Arthur, Aldersyde Road, 1922



CLASS AT
PIESSE BROOK
SCHOOL
CIRCA 1938

Back row: Marjorie Newman, Doris Palmer, Elva Loaring.

Middle row: Edwin Palmer, Beryl Thorn.

Next row: Ailsa McWhirter, Alison Palmer, Marie Loaring, Clarrie Newman, Jack McWhirter.

Front row: Ron Newman



Visitors on their Horse and cart

ALDERSYDE ROAD BLOCK

CIRCA 1922

Early days in Piesse Brook

Piesse Brook was almost an entity on its own with no shops. People who lived there were very much on their own. The Palmers would occasionally walk to Kalamunda to buy clothes from a small drapery store run by Giles the chemist.

Fortunately there were various business people who serviced the outlying areas by delivering essential supplies.

Doris' mum baked most of her own bread but occasionally would buy bread from Portwine's Bakery who delivered three times a week. The Palmers generally knew when the bakery cart was due so they would stand in the road and wave it down.

Jimmy Crabb would deliver groceries on Tuesday or Wednesday. Doris' mother would ring the order through and he would deliver it that day or the next. Nestor's butcher also delivered once a week.

There were no refrigerators then so all perishable foods were stored in a *Coolgardie Safe*. Water was placed on the top of the box and dripped down over the sides of the hessian bag keeping the food cool. They could set jellies and most foods kept very well.

Once the Telephone Exchange was installed at the Walliston Post office their house phone was allocated the code 6D Walliston. If the phone rang one long ring and two short rings they knew the call was for them. If it was a different ring it was for another house in the valley.

Kalamunda shops would close half day on Wednesdays and open all day on Saturday. This practice was established so that the orchardists could come in to the village when they were not busy working.

When Doris was older her brother Cyril bought a ute and he would take their mother into Kalamunda once a week to do her shopping. She would also go to the Ladies Auxiliary and other community meetings.

As the Palmers had transport they were able to attend the pictures held at the Kalamunda Agricultural Hall on Friday nights and the Ladies Auxiliary dance every Saturday night. Doris' brother 'talked' her mother into letting her go to the dances and he taught her many new dances. They would dance to the three piece band.



Doris Palmer 1947



ENGAGED

Gordon Mynors
Doris Palmer
14 July 1950

Working life and marriage

Doris left school at the age of 14 and started work in the film department at Kodak in Perth.

She rode her push bike to the bus stop each morning and caught the bus into Perth. She earned seventeen and sixpence a week. She spent seven and sixpence on her bus fares and gave her mother five shillings every week. Doris was able to spend the other five shillings on whatever she liked and would either save or put a dress on lay-by and pay it off.

She later worked in Ladies Wear at Selfridge's before getting a job at the Talkie Tea Rooms located in the Midland Town Hall. By this time her mother had left the farm and moved to Midland and Doris wanted a job closer to home.

When Doris was 19 years old she met Gordon Mynors while he was delivering milk to the tea rooms. His family ran the Midland Districts Dairy but after the Dairy went bankrupt the Mynors took on a couple of smaller milk runs and Gordon worked for them.

Doris and Gordon dated for about one and a half years before they married in the Methodist Church in Midland.

Gordon was an only child who grew up believing his real mother was his sister. This was a common practice in those days to hide any family indiscretions.

After getting married Gordon and Doris initially lived in a flat next door to Portwine's Bakery for about three months. They were then offered a house in Guildford for 15 shillings a week, where they lived for the next four years.

In 1959 they bought a War Service Home in Kalamunda where they remained for more than 55 years. Initially they had only a few neighbours with little orchards directly opposite them and a nursery but the area was predominantly bush. Over the years the large blocks were subdivided and houses built on them as Kalamunda expanded.

The closest shop was a Post Office which was run by various people over the years. Eventually it was expanded and became the Lesmurdie Road Shopping Centre.

Doris and Gordon had three children, Karen, Sandra and Raymond.



Gordon and Doris Mynors circa 1956



Karen, Sandra and Raymond Mynors, circa 1969

Villa Maria and Kalamunda Transport

Doris returned to work when Raymond was nine. She worked in the kitchen at St Brigid's school which had around 100-140 borders at the time. She had been working there for about four years when she was asked by one of the nuns to take over the kitchen at Villa Maria.

Villa Maria was an old house that had originally been the Lesmurdie Post Office before it moved down the road. It had also been used as a guest house where people came on Sundays for afternoon teas.

When Doris started there most of the rooms were taken up by the nuns. The old building housed about 10-12 people.

After a few years they expanded and Doris worked throughout the renovations. There was a covered pathway that ran between the house and the residents' area which disappeared during construction. Doris would walk down from the house with a tray with four dinners and race back up to get the next four. She would repeat the same with the soup and then the sweets. In the winter she would have to wear a raincoat and hat and race down in the wet between these two buildings.

Gordon gave up delivering milk when they got married and worked on the baker's run for a short while until he got a job at the Kalamunda Transport. He worked there for around 20 years where he did the 'fruit run'. He would travel to all the orchards and pick up the fruit which was packed into cases. He would then get up early in the morning to get to the markets and queue at the various agents to unload his truck.

The long hours made it a very stressful job so he finally gave his boss two weeks notice, went down to the Kalamunda Shire, was employed immediately and started work as a truck driver.

Years later Gordon was diagnosed with cancer and underwent surgery. He was advised to go on 'light duties' but he didn't bother telling the Shire as they didn't have 'light duties' so he simply returned to work doing jack hammering and all the things that he had normally done.

Cover: L-R Gordon, Audrey, Alison, Doris and puppy in front of Ruth Palmer circa 1945.

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Readers of this memoir should bear in mind
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