

History Of Earl Symonds as told in 1998 to Mrs. Wright

Earl was born in Temora NSW on the 2/2/1916. The first son and second child of Phillip & Ethel Symonds of "The Gums" Parkes NSW. Ethel had to travel to Temora for the birth, as at that time there were no hospitals in Parkes.

His father had previously traveled from South Australia Via Victoria Then Temora before settling in a farm ten miles north of Parkes.

Earl spent his early years on his father's farm and surrounding area. Between the ages of 6-15 he attended the Goobang North Public School which adjoined the property at "The Gums" After this time the depression hit (1930) and time was spent on the farm helping out by using his fathers second team of horses. One incident he remembers is the cutting of Bathurst burr during the school holidays. The owners of Goobang station introduced this when they imported some American feed during a drought in the early 1900's. Work was also undertaken by share farming with a wage of Two shillings & sixpence per bushel for wheat grown. Life was pretty hard during the depression and the family was kept alive by killing rabbits for meat (underground mutton) and also selling their skins to buy other grocery items. Odd jobs were also taken; one was a job at a sawmill twenty miles away. Earl traveled to this mill and back again each day for a wage of ten shillings per day. During the childhood period the children would only travel to Parkes as a Family once per year, not to buy anything as they had little money but just to look. The journey took one and a half hours in a horse and sulky.

During school years they would be awoken at 5am as they were cows to milk, poultry to be fed milk to be separated butter to be made and would be just arriving at the school as the last pupils were going in the door for the morning session. The first teacher at the school boarded with them and as the house was small Mum Dad and three of the children shared a room so that the teacher could have one. This extra money supplemented the family's income. The Children were from eldest to youngest Merle, Earl, Keith, Roy and Vera. The jobs were then undertaken again when school was out, Gardens to be weeded. Kindling to be cut to light the fire in the morning, eggs to be gathered and the cows to be milked. Sunday would be spent attending Sunday school and church and with some free time. Saturdays would be spend gathering wood for the fire and feed for the animals to use in the coming week

Social events were very rare, some tennis on occasions but no dancing as Mum & dad did not believe in it. The children rarely went anywhere. Earl remembers when he was about 20 he went to town to see a girl in his second hand Studebaker which he had bought for Twenty Pounds. There was no such thing as holidays till 1937.

In 1940 Earl was called up for national service and served in Alice Springs Katherine & Darwin between 1940-1945. It was during this time he was encouraged to write to a sister of one of the unit members (Joseph Doust), as things were pretty lonely on the front line. They corresponded for two years and when they met, Grace was found to be shy young lady, the youngest of twelve children. They were married in 2/05/1946.

On return from the war Earl Continued share farming. He applied for a farm but in a mix up between solicitor and bank manager lost his Two Thousand Pound deposit, as the finance was not used in the set time of ninety days. As His brothers had the share farming contract and were reluctant to relinquish it, Earl commenced to set

up a blacksmith and farm machinery repair business on eight acres on the outskirts of Parkes. Some one said, "You wont make any money in blacksmithing" in which Earl, replied,"I'll make more than I have now which is nothing" After building some extensions on the house on the land Earl established his business and raised eight children. From eldest to youngest Phillip, Brian, Rose, Milton, Graham, Ian, Lesle & Joy. A further string in Earls Bow was the Acquisition and moving of a number of houses to the property which he rented out. As each member of the family left home, the properties were sold for a nominal fee to start each child off in the family life.

After a special vintage farm exhibit at the Parkes Show, Earl and a number of farmers and other interested people sought to find a permanent dwelling place for some of this districts heritage. Some of the initial instigators were Earl & Grace Symonds, Len Unger Norm Plowman Lou Davey. To kick this along Earl Sold Three acres of his property to the council for Crown Land so a Machinery Museum to exhibit the old machinery. Ninety percent of the machinery was donated with some small engines aquired at auction sales. For a number of months all weekends and spare time were spent operating his home made crane truck to pick up the old machinery and transport it to the Pioneer Museum Park at Parkes. The old truck used to consume forty-four gallons of fuel a fortnight all of the costs were donated by Earl so the younger generations could appreciate the history of our ancestors and the difficulties that were endured in establishing this district to what it is today. Council is now establishing Sir Henry Parkes Cottage & Museum development on this site, which will ultimately include besides the museum, an antique motor museum, art gallery and other assorted craft and gift stores.
