

My late Father, Charles Bowman Wilson, was one of the old school who began his journalistic career in the office of "Peninsula Post" in Mornington at the age of 14 years. Dad's wages were minute then, and his duties entailed tea making, compositing, cleaning duties, assisting in the printing of the paper, folding it and then post horse delivery of the printed weekly to town residents. He worked a total of 44 years for the same paper, but as the years rolled on his principal employ was journalist.

In 1863 my Father's Grandparents settled at Lubba Rubba, the Mornington Peninsula's only claim to gold fame on hundreds of acres of land. Lubba Rubba nearer Balnarring than Mornington, has now melted into the past as has its neighbour Joxie's Hangout where dead foxes were hung on the road side from a large old eucalypt tree. The only reminder of the era is the grazing property Lubba Rubba.

My Great Grandparents reared a large family at Lubba Rubba in what was then a virtually untamed wilderness. The gold was less productive than anticipated but grazing on cleared land accorded survival.

Seven sons all over six feet were born there to my ancestors and one daughter was five feet eight and a half inches.

Great Grandfather was a Scottish sea captain who had been decorated for bravery at sea, but he caught gold fever coming from Keilor claims to Lubba Rubba.

My pioneer ancestry were all honest hard working

people of the stuff that helped make Australia what it is today.

Naturally being situated six miles from the closest school, horse was their only transport and all children were educated at Osborne State School which too saw its Centenary some years ago. Osborne is near Mt Martha.

My grandmother spent her youthful sparetime riding side saddle, and was an elegant tall figure who so journeyed to Frankston and return to attend the official opening of the Frankston Railway Station just over 100 years ago. No mean feat as return she travelled about thirty miles on her horse.

Dad through his own contact made friends wherever he journeyed throughout the Peninsula as his journalistic wings expanded as he reported meetings rain or shine through Port Phillip and Westernport often till 3am.

Very early in his career he became the Peninsula Press Correspondent for Melbourne daily and weekly newshapers for two pence a line and later he was appointed the A.B.C Radio News correspondent and after 1956 his stories kept the Peninsula on the map via A.B.C television. From his teens he was the Peninsula correspondent for the Melbourne stage until his death.

Reporting meetings, employed far longer hours than any union journalist of today, instead of overtime he was allotted time off, Dad did not stop there as he became voluntary Publicity Officer, of the now defunct Mornington Publicity League, an office he held until the early stages

of World War Two. In his youth he was also a delegate of the Mornington Peninsula Football League and held this position until his demise in 1969. He was appointed a Life Member of the M.P.F.L ultimately.

To help make ends meet Dad kept a cow in a paddock on the busy Spear Highway at Mornington. Milking time saw Dad forced to ride his bicycle about four miles per day with me on the bar before he began and ended his days work.

As his Father was before him Dad was a keen gardener who grew the families vegies and flowers, mostly cold summer nights in a freezing easterly Summer wind he would stand from about 9pm watering his beloved garden.

My Grandfather was such another. He was self employed and another good old aussie battler whose main income was derived from stripping wattle bark in the Mornington, Mt Eliza area, supplementary income being earned through fencing, whilst Grandmother cleaned the Mornington State School for 50 cents per week. This school has seen too its Centenary where family old pupils attended three generations of us.

After working with his team of horses in what was then virgin bushland Grandfather would work in the garden in moonlight and carry water in kerosene tins to nurture an acre of orchard, maize, flowers and vegetables. Ancestors have told me often his horses dropped with strangles and then Grandfather would walk home many miles to do the same chores at home in his garden.

As the years rolled on Dad added more to his devotional life style of caring unselfishness as he was elected a Councillor in the Shire of Mornington for 19 years. Shortly after election he became a Foreshore Committee member, plus he was voluntary Secretary of the Mornington Rail Electrification Committee and worked tirelessly to encourage the setting up of local industry, giving up his own time without any financial reward to ultimately talk the Education Department into purchase necessary land for the Mornington High School and to seek land for factories to employ local people.

It was not unusual for Dad to lose a day's pay whilst he attended Rail deputations in an effort to regain the Mornington Rail service, which he had returned to the town about six months prior ^{to} his death, but found someone neglected to invite Dad ^{him} to the re-opening ceremony which hurt him badly.

Never have I seen a man so loved and respected through the entire Peninsula. The Peninsula which was his whole life did not forget him when untimely demise met him at 63 years of age as friends from Portsea, across Westernport to Melbourne attended to pay their last respects in their hundreds.

In recent years Mornington has a Citizen of the Year award. It seems a pity that awards are not made posthumously to recognise some of the older generation who helped make Mornington, more than merely the watering place on Port Phillip Bay, Schnapper Point as it was previously known and now the home of 26,000 residents.



CHARLES BOWMAN WILSON.
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