

Chapter 2: Wilsons Creek Packing Shed as House

1950 - 1956

- **THE PACKING SHED HOUSE**

.... we lived in this before Dad built the house across the creek (equivalent to the caravan Harriet and I lived in for four years on our land from 1977 to 1981 in Brisbane) There was Dad, Mum and I plus Gerald (born in 1952) and Rick (born in 1956) who was one year old.

We lived in this two roomed converted banana packing shed for a number of years from 1950 to 1956 Colin was born in 1958 in the new house across the creek ... It had cream painted tar - paper walls on the wooden framing and a simple system of 12-volt lights for lighting. Dad used to charge up a number car batteries in the engine room across the creek They were placed serially in line to maximise the power.

My bed, more settee was in the first room of the house outside were just unpainted, greying and overlapped weatherboards on the roof was grey galvanised tin roof in typical packing shed construction raised up a metre or so off the ground on wooden stumps I remember catching mice in the mouse trap under this housean outdoor timber toilet above the house with a cream painted toilet seat over a small drum bucket water for drinking was obtained by walking down the hill about fifty metres down to the creek and getting a square kerosene bucket of water A really laborious chore of bringing the water from the creek. Then leaving it on the ramp landing to the front door.

Osman's (Dad's relations) came to stay from New Zealand ... Lorna was Dad's twin sister Linda who would have only been about four years old was constantly dipping her feet in the bucket to wash her feet each time she came inside everyone getting frustrated with her behaviour.

Cooking was done on a slow combustion stove set in a galvanised iron recess ironing was done with a shellite iron with blue flames emerging from round the iron Shellite was like methylated spirits The burning kept the

base hot Refrigeration was by a Coleman Refrigerator where cold was created in the fridge by a rising column of heated air going up a small flue at the back of the fridge ... the heated air column was created by a perpetually burning kerosene wick at the base of the flue a metal kerosene reservoir had to be filled periodically to keep the flame burning The radio was a valve radio run on as pack of batteries cemented together by bitumen which ran out occasionally.



This was the shed above the new house Dad built in 1956. It was built from the dismantled banana packing shed we lived in the early 1950's till Dad built the new house. The present shed is used for storage by the people who rent the house.

Photographs:



A Valve Radio from the 1950's of the kind we used ourselves at Wilsons Creek. This one is of the same era from the Kent Household (Harriet's family) in Melbourne.



The Engine Room on the creek for pumping water up to the top tank. It housed a big diesel engine and a belt driven piston pump that drew water from the lower pool in the creek.

The Engine Room was rebuilt in the 1980's where by the board framing was replaced with corrugated iron sheeting.

**The Engine Room Across the Creek from
later sketch I did High School in 1966**

Scanned Photo of the
Engine Room Drawing

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The actual pump which Dad brought to Ken at Chambers Flat in the early 1990's in his nursery truck. It is on display going down the driveway. At the far back was a wide pulley which run off the diesel by a wide flat canvas and rubber belt,. The turning wheel moved a piston which sucked water up from the creek to the tank above the house.



The lower pool for the pump



OUTSIDE:

- **Washing:** Mum had a cast iron copper with copper tub inside down by the creek it was boiled up once per week for washing the clothes it had a proper clothesline near an open shelter for the tubs The clothes were soaking one night in the copper to be ready next morning for the boiling's up Had two coppers at the time didn't normally soak the clothes overnight but this time was ready for an early morning start.

That night the creek really flooded the soaking clothes in the copper were washed away down the creek in the morning both Mum and Dad had to go down the creek retrieving clothes caught in tree branches.

The Copper beside the creek ...I remember well going down there one day and the fire had burnt down I was only about five I threw some kerosene from the nearby bottle on the hot coalsit led to great **WOOSH !** it blew out and burnt my eyebrows and hair ... the way to learn quickly on the dangers of fire!

I remember also walking up from the creek to the shed up the red dirt path and wondering what dirt tastes like not very good!

- **Short - wheel based Land Rover** for transport to and from Mullumbimby and church kept down in the shade under the Sally Wattle trees on the creek flat. It had a canvas top



- **A wooden footbridge** to the other side of the creek to the engine room had a wooden trolley, steel wheels and wooden rails walking across it with Uncle Jack and Aunty Daphe (Jack was Dad's brother) one year ... seeing the water swirl from an eel in the shallows.
- **Silver torch** One day going into a rubbish area near the house to get a thrown out silver torch pushing my way through these green bushes ... not realising they were stinging nettles Mum had to douse me with a blue bag (alkaline vs. acid from the nettles).

- **Fishing:** Being forbidden by Dad to use the thin brown twine on the spool Dad kept in his drawer in their bedroom reading a book one day on a bear who had many adventures and went fishing and caught a fish Going to Dad's draw one Sabbath afternoon ... Dad was away somewhere ... opening the draw and cutting off a couple of feet of twine ... making a bent pin hook ... finding a worm for bait going down to a fork in a water gum tree below the old crossing over a shallow pool and letting my line dangle in the water with a worm on the bent pin pulling the line up later and there was a mud gudgeon on the end it had swallowed my bent pin totally ... my first fishing effort I was only seven And wasn't Ken excited !!!

The photograph to the right is of the forked watergum I sat in above the pool. The photograph was taken in January 2006



- **Playing with Dallas Atkins** (friend from church) with toy trucks and cars in the dirt under Mr. Walker's shed Watching Mr. Walker packing bananas ... being naughty with Gerald and one day throwing ends of the banana hands into this open case until one day he really got mad with us and exploded and caught us.
- Going to **Osman's place (Dad's sister in Sydney)** at Jannali in Sydney Once it was by the short wheel based Land Rover Cooking sausages and eggs in a frying pan on the kerosene primus The other time by train Mum getting out in hurry and getting a cup of coffee Me sleeping in the luggage rack .

When we got there I remember the house Playing with Linda and Colleen, my cousins on their tricycle Gerald taking the skin off his big toe Walking across a bridge nearby and seeing the electric trains running underneath I was only six years old, Gerald was four and Rick was six months.

- **The Family:** whilst in the banana packing shed, the family had increased to three boys ... Ken, Gerald and Rick. I remember one night being bundled into the back of the short wheel based Land Rover with Gerald (it had a canvas top on it) with blankets and Dad driving Mum to Murwillumbah Hospital to have Rick as a baby. Colin was born later in the late 1950's when we eventually moved to the new house across the creek.



Washing and swimming in the creek with Ken and Mum with Gerald on her lap

Overview of the general layout: ... not to scale

Site Diagram 1: Stage 2: Wilson's Creek House:

