

My Life Story (which is true)
by Sarah Jane (Philbey) Burton - Born 1869
(Daughter of George Philbey and Mary Ann Simmonds)
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Well, to start off my father and mother (George and Mary Ann Philbey) migrated to Australia about 100 years ago. I am not certain of the exact year, but I know they arrived in separate ships and that my father arrived first. They were both single at the time and eventually met each other somewhere around Adelaide.

Father went to the gold diggings in Victoria when the gold rush was on and he stayed there for a short time - not very long - as, being a new chum, he did not understand the work, so he worked for some of the diggers as a rouseabout, carried their water and did their cooking. I have often heard him say there were a lot of rough ones there and he had to share his tent with another man, a never-do-well chap who used to go through the other men's tents during the day while the men were away. They used to give my father two matches a day to light the fire. As everything was wet and green, he had to be very careful with the matches. As there was not very much paper to light the fire with, he had to use dry leaves which fell from gum trees. They had bunks to sleep in, which they had made out of old bags and long pieces of limbs of trees, so he put the leaves between himself and the old bags on his bunk to keep them dry, so he would be able to light the fire in the morning.

They had a billy to boil the water in and a camp oven to do the cooking in. They used to have a damper for bread - flour mixed with water, made into a stiff dough and then flattened out and put into the hot ashes to cook. For those who do not know what a camp oven is, I will try and describe it. It was made of cast iron and was round, measuring about 15 inches across the centre of the top; the oven itself was about nine inches deep and stood on three legs. It had a lid to fit the top of the oven, with a loop on the top to lift it off. With the lid on, a big fire was lit underneath and left until the oven got hot, then whatever you were going to bake was placed in the oven, after which a fire was lit on top of the lid to keep the stove hot enough to do the baking. I might say, my father had one for years.

I heard my father say that, one night on the diggings, the man and himself, sleeping in the tent, heard some men outside their tent fumbling around trying to find out which side my father was sleeping on. They did not want to harm him, but they wanted to get to the other man, as they thought he was the one that had been stealing their things during the day. They were going to shoot him, but they could not decide which side of the tent he was on, but the noise that they were making aroused the sleepers and, as soon as the men outside heard them moving inside the tent, they made off. My father said that they were a very rough lot and he did not stop there long and, shortly after, tramped to South Australia.

My father first worked in a garden at Payneham, with a man called Marsden - he was a gardener and houseboy. I have often heard him talk about it. He used to have to clean the boots - not shoes in those days. His master had a monkey, which, like all others, was very mischievous. The monkey used to watch where the blacking was put - a little bit every morning was left over for next cleaning - but, when my father went to clean his boots, all the blacking was gone. The master wanted to know what my father was doing with it; my father told him he had no idea where it was going, so my father bought some blacking, put it on the shelf and left it overnight. When he got up in the morning, the blacking was gone and the monkey was dead beside the remains.

My father did not stop at that place any longer. He came into town and met my mother for the first time and they were married in a week (at the Maid and Magpie Hotel). They did not have any money, only a few pounds which both of them had saved. They bought a few cooking utensils and a tent and worked and lived there for a few years. My father got some grubbing to do. He had to walk 10 miles morning and night. His lunch consisted of bread and dripping and a bottle of cold tea.

My elder sister made her appearance just 95 years ago. The wild dogs were very plentiful in those days. I have often heard my mother say, one night they were awakened, they lit a tallow candle and they were just in time, as a wild dog was about to drag the baby out of a box they had for her to sleep in, so they had to be very cautious after that and not leave the baby alone.

All the water had to be carried in a bucket from the Gawler River, which was two miles away. They had a piece of canvas and, when it rained, they laid it out so they could catch the water. Needless to say, everything that my father used to work for one of the settlers who was up there before him. There were three or four houses not very far apart and, between them, they cleared the scrub, which was mostly mallee and tea tree. There were also a lot of pine trees, which they cut down and they helped my father build a little home of two rooms. Of course, the family had increased by that time. There was another baby girl who died in infancy and there were three boys, the oldest died about four years ago aged 84. As the boys grew up they were a great help to my father, as the neighbours, who did not have any boys, hired our boys for a few shillings a week and their food.

There was not very much food to be got in those days. There were no rabbits, but plenty of wild turkey and, if you were lucky enough to get a kangaroo, that meant kangaroo tail soup and steak from the meaty parts, or the

forequarter of a wallaby, sometimes a bit of salt meat if one of the neighbours was going into Gawler, as everyone helped each other in those days. Along came two more baby girls. I do not know how my mother fed them, as they had no cow and my mother had to do all her cooking and bake her bread in a camp oven outside and do all her washing out in the sun.

Father bought a small holding and got two horses and a dray and used to cart wood into Gawler and bring home the necessary things. At last I came along, making the seventh child. I do not remember that day, but have overheard my mother say that it was a very wet and cold day and she had no one in the house to help her. It was in the month of June. My eldest sister, being 14, was away from home at the time. One of the neighbours went away to another farm that he had bought and they also had a young family of four or five children and he wanted someone to help his wife to mind them. He asked father if he would let the eldest girl go with them; to this my father and mother agreed. She was not adopted, but got six shillings a week and keep and all her clothes. She had a good home and could come home and stay with us for a few weeks four or five times a year. They gradually increased her wages up to 10 shillings a week and she stayed with them until she married about seven years ago.

I think I am going away from my story. As I said before, I could not recollect when I just did come into this world, but I will start now as far back as I can remember. I think I must have been about four years old. We were sent to Sunday school about one mile away. I can remember our house quite well. It was built of upright pines put into a trench dug into the ground about a foot deep and the pines put up straight close together and then the spaces between them where the pines did not touch each other were filled in with wet clay. There were openings left for windows and bags or calico nailed across to keep out the wind and rain. The partition was made of bags opened out and then sewn together and hung across from wall to wall. There was one door, which was a very shabby green colour with one of the panels out.

I remember one day, although quite young, I fell over a big tree that had fallen down and I cut my knee and the blood ran down my leg into my boot. One day another girl came over to play with my two elder sisters; they had made friends while going to every day school. I only went to Sunday school in those days, because my father had to pay one shilling a week for each child. When the three boys were not working with father, they went to school for a few weeks; their ages were 10, eight and six. If he had the boys out with him, the girls went. It went on like that for a couple of years, until my father had saved a little money.

One of the neighbours bought some land about 100 miles away and told my father if he could sell his and come up with him, they would share the farm. There was a three roomed house to live in and plenty of water, so my father sold his land and went up the other side of Port Wakefield. We had two drays, two horses in tandem fashion and one horse in the other. Although only five, I can still remember that journey. The dray with two horses had our beds and table and, I think, two chairs and a sofa. I think that completed our furniture, except for a large box my father had brought out from England with him. The other dray, which followed, contained the family. My father drove the first dray with one of the boys beside him - he was the naughty one and was then eight years of age. The other boy drove mother, four girls and two boys. One girl died a year later. We started off quite early in the morning and arrived at our destination next day at 3.00 pm. I remember how we went to play as soon as we got there. It was something fresh. It was a mud pool where we played, while our parents, with the aid of the boys, unloaded their furniture and put the beds up ready for night.

My father worked there for several years and had no rent to pay and things were very cheap. He had saved a little money and he still had his two horses and spring dray. Then he bought a block of land on money he had borrowed and saved. It was in the middle of the scrub. There were no roads, only a surveyors line between each block. He was about half a mile from the main road, or the travelling stock road as we used to call it at that time. He would go down that road for about a mile.

One day I remember quite well, he told my mother he would walk to work and she had to harness the horse and put it in the dray and go down the road until she saw something on the road that he would leave. When she got there, she was to coo-ee twice and, if he answered coo-ee once, she would know it was him and she must wait there till he came. We children were very interested in our new place; nothing else mattered. She had the three youngest with her, one sister older than my-self and her baby boy about three years old. We waited then until father came along. He was very much surprised, as he said he did not know how she got there, as all the harness was upside down and he said, "Why bless me Mary, you have all the harness and saddle on back to forward." It was fastened underneath, instead of on top, and the saddle was put on the wrong way about, but, as young as I was, I remember my father saying it was a wonder we were not all killed. My mother said she passed two men in a dray; they stopped and looked at her and laughed and drove on. Anyway, she got there safely.

My father started to cut down the mallee trees to make a path for mother to drive over the land. It took most of the day, as he could not go straight across, but had to twist here and there where the trees were not so thick. After arriving at the tent which he had pitched, we had some dinner which mother brought with her. After dinner mother helped father for a few hours and we children had to stop close by, as the scrub was so dense they thought we would get lost if we wandered away.

Sometime in the afternoon father thought if he put the horse into the dray again he would cut another path in a

different direction, it would be nearer home and he would find his way to and fro easier. So, we got up in the dray once more, mother drove and followed after father as he cut down the trees where they were not so thick. She was following up a short distance from him and drove over a big log that was in her way, the dray tipped over and out and we all went to earth, but luckily none of us were hurt. Father hurried back to our rescue, but I do not remember how we got home. Being young, we were more interested in our surroundings, but I do know that father always harnessed the horse before he went to work. A few months after that, we went to live in our new home and address.

I must say that we lived on a road near a big black gate, the property of a man who owned a lot of land; it was a small station at the time, it was all through the hills, between Port Wakefield and Kulpara. Our delight was to ramble over the hills and down the gullies when there were no wild cattle about, as he used to keep a lot of sheep and cattle, as most of it was grazing property. We used to pick the green shoots and eat them - we thought them very nice.

Then the day came when we left the above farm and went to our own place. I was about eight years old then and, with my two sisters, went to a small school about one and a half miles away. It was in a barn which was Sunday school and church on Sundays. I remember the seats, or forms we used to call them, were made of large pines split down the centre and smoothed off. They had four legs; two each end, and were about six feet long. There was a small table to keep the books on. That was about 70 years ago.

We used to walk up there every Sunday to school and church in the afternoon. There were a good many people who used to come three or four miles and bring their children. Sometimes you would see mother and father carrying one each and perhaps one walking. If there was anyone coming along your way with a horse *and* spring dray, you would always get a lift if there was room.

From that time we were very busy. First, we went into our own home, made of bags sewn together and pines put into the ground and bags on the floor to keep the sand and the wind down, as my father was one of the foolish men that built his house on the sand. The wind and the storm came along one night and he had to get up and put some bags on top of the iron, as we had an iron roof.

We, as children, were very happy in our own way. We had to bring in our morning wood every night and some dry leaves to light the fire with. But there was one thing lacking. We did not have a clock and we went to bed when it got dark. If the moon was shining, father would call us and we would get up and light the fire and burn all the wood and then it would not be daylight, only moonlight. Still, we got tired of the daylight to break and would go and lie down and have another sleep. When we finally did get up, we had to start off again, as we did before, as every day was much of the same.

My father began by grubbing every day to clear his block. He used to have a grubber, an axe and a shovel and it used to take him half a day to grub one tree. It was very slow work and it made him very tired. He only cleared a very small bit the first year, so reaped a very few bags of wheat. To make ends meet, he would go away and cart wheat to Laura and would be away several weeks at a time, as he only had a dray and two horses to cart it with. My eldest brother used to go with him and mother was left home with the rest of the family.

We had only a few chooks - no cows or pigs then - and mother used to go out washing for a few of the neighbours who had been there longer than us and had more land cleared and therefore more money. She would go away early in the morning and come home before it got dark. Two of my other brothers were working also and one of my sisters, leaving three children at home. There were no amusements of any kind, so we made our own fun. We had a swing in the pines; we also had a see-saw. I might say we had no fireplace in the tent and had to light a fire outside and the old camp oven and billy came into use again.

As time went on, father cleared more scrub and he got a few more bags of wheat next year and every year he got a little more. In his spare time, which was not much, with the help of the one boy he had at home he would go out in the scrub and cut down pine trees, which were very plentiful in the sand hills, trim all the green branches off and cart them home. When he had enough pines, he started to build our home. He built two rooms and one door to enter each room. He used to cut the pines down and split them through the middle and then used an adze (not many about now) to smooth them off. There was no fireplace. Finally things began to take shape. Father bought a single furrow plough and a set of three harrows. It took him a long time to plough the ground.

The place that father had cleared was a straight piece, about one quarter of a mile long. They used to walk up and down that length a good many times a day, holding the handle of the plough and the reins to guide the horse. The reins were made of rope. Father used to sow the wheat. For this he had a small oval tub with a strap from each handle. He would put as much wheat as he could in it and, with the strap around his neck, he would walk up and down throwing the wheat, first one side and then the other, until it was all done. It would take a week or perhaps a month according to the size of the land. Also, the weather might stop him for a few days in the winter. After it was all sown they would have to harrow it, which would not take quite so long. After the crop was sown, there would be more time to complete the house. In between seeding and harvest, he would take contracts for road-making. He helped make a good many roads around Kulpara; that brought in a little more money.

The men always wore white moleskin trousers and a blue-striped shirt. Mother made all their shirts and flannel shirts by hand. We girls only had two dresses each, besides one for Sunday. Our dresses were made of brown holland. They were always made alike, with a few shirt buttons down the front for trimming. Mother used to make her jumpers of the same material. We girls always had a clean dress for Monday morning and again on Wednesday morning to go to school.

I might say there were a good many kangaroos about at that time, which came out at night and got into the crop. We had no fences and would have to get up in the morning early to go and frighten them away. The old man kangaroo would often defy us and then one of the older boys would get on a horse and come along with a long whip and drive them away. That went on for a few years. As the settlers came along and some had dogs and the kangaroos went further afield, we were not troubled with so many.

People began clearing the scrub by rolling it down in the winter time and letting it lay on the ground all the summer to dry. Then, when everyone had their wheat carted in, someone would light a fire to burn all the dried mallee that had been rolled down. I have seen a fire a mile wide sweeping across the place. Of course, we had to be very careful and not let it too close to the house. The cattle had to be kept in on the piece of ground where the wheat had been. It would be terribly hot, but we all had to be watching with a bag or a large bough in our hands in case a fire came over the boundary. If it did, we had to run and stop it. We were fairly safe if the wind was not in the north.

I remember a fire starting at Port Broughton in the middle of the week. There were not many settlers about and it was allowed to burn, as it was not troubling anyone, but, when Sunday night came, father was getting very uneasy, as there was a big reflection in the sky. He walked across a big sand hill, where he could see more plainly. Mother went with him; we children were frightened, so they took us too. When we came back, he thought it would be safe until morning, so we went to bed. Next Monday, he thought it might be dying out, so he and the boys went about their work as usual, but on Tuesday there was a very hot north wind blowing and the fire started up again. We children were sent up to a neighbour who lived on a plain away from the scrub and mother put all our clothes in an iron tank that had no water in it. The fire reached our place about midday. All the men for miles, who were living in the opposite direction from the fire, came to our assistance. One man brought a small tank, holding about 100 gallons of water, so the men could have a drink, but by sunset the fire had passed through our place and finished up a couple of days later down near Maitland. When we got up next morning, what had been green scrub and mallee trees was nothing but dry black sticks. As the fire went too quickly to burn down the trees, they were left standing. After that, we had nothing but dust, day after day, until the winter came and the green grass began to grow.

I might say that, while the fire was on, the birds from everywhere even came into the house; they were so exhausted we could pick them up in our hands. A large eagle came from somewhere; it had been in captivity, as it had a small chain on its leg. Mother caught it and tied it up. Someone told her it was a savage bird, so in the morning she let it go and it flew away. After the fire, everything went on as usual again. There was not much damage done, as there were not many settlers in the way of the fire. We did not see many kangaroos after that - I think they must have made the plains - but the wallabies were more plentiful.

Soon after that, my school days started. As I said before, the weekday and Sunday school was in an old barn. We had to walk one and a half miles each way; wet or cold, we never stopped home. If it was raining and we got wet, we were allowed to sit by the fire and do our lessons and dry our clothes. I was about eight when I started and left at 12 and a half in the fifth class. Before going to school in the morning, I had to get the two cows in to be milked and do some weeding in the garden.

We did not have any garden in the summer, as there was no water, only what was carted from a government dam about a mile away. We only had a 400 gallon tank on a dray and two horses with which to cart it, but we had two calves and pigs and fowls and two cows to water. We had to wash and do everything and make it last a week. We all had to wash in the same water when we got up in the morning and then what was left the pigs had to drink. We used to put it with the milk that went sour. Being pigs, they did not mind, as long as it was wet. There were often as many as 20 or 30 wagons waiting at the government dam for water. Some had 200 or 400 gallon tanks on them, others 100, so the pump was going day and night. They had to stand on a high platform and pump it. We were only one mile away and sometimes our boys would be away 24 hours and bring home 200 gallons. When the dam was empty, the government sent a water train up from somewhere (I never knew where) twice a week and you had to be there waiting hours before the train came, or you would not get any water. Sometimes, if they would not get it from the train, they had to go down to Whitwater, where there was a spring of water, although very brackish. It was 18 miles and took two days. Things went on like that for three or four years, until people began making tanks of their own and dams also. There was one man up there who had two large underground tanks and sometimes a traveler would pass and call in for a bucket of water. He would charge three shillings and sixpence for it, or about nine pence a gallon; however, the times were hard and the weather was hot.

My sisters and I used to walk about a mile at a time and carry home two kerosene buckets of water each day. We used to have a long stick with the buckets in the middle and used to bring home about seven gallons of water that way. As time went on, father sank a tank about one quarter of a mile from the house and we had to carry all the household water for domestic use in buckets. He had to make the tank there, since the water ran that way and our

house was on a sand hill. Every morning on Mondays, we would carry our clothes down there to wash. We had our tubs and boiler hidden under some bushes. We would stand out in the sun without any covering over us, but we found it easier to do that than carry all the water up in buckets. We did that for several summers until we were able to get a tank down near the house.

So father set to work to dig a tank; it was about 15 feet deep and 14 feet across. The only tools they had were picks and shovels. When it got too deep to throw the dirt up, two buckets with long ropes tied to the handles would be used. As one bucket went down to be filled, the other would come up. That went on for some time and was very hard work. When that was finished, some way of holding the water had to be found, so father decided to make a lime kiln. He had the boys dig another big hole about nine feet deep and carted a lot of wood and stone to fill it all in. It was lined with one layer of wood at the bottom about two feet thick and then a layer of white limestone; this would alternate until about three feet above ground level. As the wood burnt, the stones would fall and the heat would cause them to burn and crumble and turn into lime. Father would put glass bottles in with the stones and sometimes they would come out in peculiar shapes. We would keep them for ornaments. I might say he did that once a year in the spring, when there was no danger of fire starting. Well, to continue the water question, when the lime was ready, which usually took about a week, my father and the boys - the oldest was then about 18 - carted a load of sand and, with some water in a wooden tub, mixed the sand and lime together and made it into mortar. They stoned up the sides of the tank and put stones all over the bottom; you could get plenty of stones by carting them two miles. The stones would be as level as he could make them, then fill in with mortar. He would do the bottom last and it used to be ready to catch a drop of water when the rain came. Well, it did come at last and the tank was ready.

Water carrying went on every summer for several years, as people did not have much opportunity to go building dams, as they had to clear the land a little bit every year to put the crop in. If anyone got 100 bags, or perhaps a little more, they thought they were lucky.

They used to reap with a reaping machine; it generally took a team of three or four horses. They worked from sunrise until dark, so they had to reap when it was very hot, or else the wheat did not thresh out too well from the chaff. It was put into big heaps and left for a day or two and then they started winnowing. This machine had beaters, as we used to call them, fixed in a kind of big drum with a wheel attached and a handle about one foot long. There was a box affair on top and a slide coming down the back. It always took two to work this. One had to turn the handle and the other one to feed the machine. As the handle was being turned, the beaters would make enough wind to send the chaff in one direction and the wheat would come down the slide at the back. I did not mention that the machine was standing on a large tarpaulin to keep the wheat off the ground. After winnowing for a few hours there would be enough wheat to start bagging. By working all day like that, we might have about 10 or 12 nice bags of golden grain done, which was very pleasing. They all had to be sewn and carted into the shed. Other times they were taken to Port Wakefield straight to the mill, about 20 bags or as much as a wagon would hold and five horses would be used if you were lucky enough to have a team like that. We only started off with two, but our neighbours always came to the rescue and my father always helped them whenever he could.

No matter how hot the day, there was no shirking; everyone had to do his or her bit. When the wheat was taken to the mill to sell, generally about two bags of flour were brought home, also some bran and pollard. All the chaff that came from the winnowing machine was carted up near the stable and put in a big heap. We also had a big horse rake, about two yards wide, and raked all the stubble and straw up and carted it and covered all the chaff - we used to call it cocky chaff. Then, in the summer, when there was little food, we would feed the horses and cows. We would take a bucket of water and get a bag of chaff. We had several large cases we used to put the chaff in and damp it and mix bran and pollard in it. The water made it stick to the chaff and the cattle used to like it. This went on for several summers.

Each summer there was a little more to do and as the cattle increased we had to cut a little hay, which at first my father used to cut with a scythe. This was very hard work and then there was the carting of the hay and putting it into a stack. Later we bought a second hand chaff cutter. It took three to work it and was very hard. I had to turn the handle of the good machine many times, as I had to do with the winnowing machine. We used to cut about three or four bags at once - that would last about a week mixed with the cocky chaff.

Well, in due time mullening came in. That was when all the scrub was rolled down in the winter months and let lay on the ground all the summer to dry. And then, when everybody's wheat was reaped, each one was set afire and the scrub burnt, but not all the same day, so day after day there were fires to be seen. The air was full of smoke. It would be very hot and, between times in the summer, if the water was scarce they went water carting. One day they were chaff cutting with a horse cutter which my father bought. It had a big wheel in the middle, with four large poles attached to it. A horse was harnessed to each pole and I had to sit in the middle on a stand to drive the horses. One day a large snake came out of the haystack when the horses were going around. As each horse followed the other, one horse shied, broke his pole and turned in the opposite direction. Of course, that made the others turn, so there were two more poles broken and I went into the machinery, just escaping being killed, but as usual I came out without a scratch. As I have said, I had a narrow one when we went to earth in the spring dray.

I might say, when we went there first, we did not have any clocks; we went by the sun. We used to go to bed after dark, not knowing how early it was, so after a good sleep, my father would wake up and, if it happened to be moonlight, he would think it was daylight, so he would call us and we used to get up and light the fire with leaves and small wood that we had brought in the night before. We would sit and wait and burn all the morning wood and still it was not morning, so we would go and have another turn in blanket street until morning really did come. We were doing that for several winters and at last he bought a clock. I think it must have been an alarm clock, as we did not any more have early mornings.

Well, as time went, we got another two horses, but still water was very scarce. It rained one day and a little water went into the dam. My brother took the horses to have a drink from it. As we had previously drawn all the water out with a bucket, he thought they might get their own. He drove them up to the dam, about half a mile from the house, and, while he was going up, it started to rain very heavily. The ground got very sticky and slippery, as it was all clay, and one of the horses, which we had just bought, slipped in and could not get out. The more he struggled, the more he went in and finally my brother came running home, calling as he came along, almost out of breath, that Lanky, the horse that was in the dam, could not get out. They got two horses and put in the dray, some bags and chains. Mother and father and the boys went along to see if they could get poor Lanky out. Being on the main road, people passing soon spread the news that one of the Philbey's horses was in the dam and they could not get it out, so several men came along to help, which was good of them, as it turned out to be very cold and it rained all the afternoon. At last they got poor Lanky out by pulling him with chains tied around his legs. He plunged and, the more he disturbed the water, it made it so that no one could get near him. Poor Lanky died as soon as they got him out. A great loss, as we were just beginning to get on our feet. That was our first mishap.

Soon after that, one of our other horses misbehaved herself. She got out of the paddock and went poaching in another man's paddock. He threw a stone at her and blinded her in one eye, her name being Polly, but after that she had a good many names, as she got very cunning when we went to catch her. She would look with one eye to see which way we were coming. When she saw us, she would chase us with her mouth open to bite us, so we used to take a bundle of green feed or whatever we could get. She was very good for a while - we could put a rope around her neck easily - but she soon took a tumble, as she knew that we wanted her to work with the other horses. So, to get her into the yard, we had to get the other three horses into the paddock with her, then drive them all into the yard together and slip up amongst the others and get her on the blind side. By a by, she had a little foal like herself. A pretty little thing and, when the foal grew up, they wanted a name for it. It was discussed at the breakfast table; I was about 12 then and thought I could have a say in things. so I said we could call her Flirt and Flirt she was by name and nature. So, you see, we had a few experiences with our horses.

Starting farming with an empty pocket was no joke in those days, so when I left school, as I have said before, I was about 12 and a half years old I had got up into the fifth class and father thought I should be able to help a little. My other two sisters went out to work, so I had to learn to milk, which I did not mind much. We had several big pans and used to strain the milk and let it stand for about three days in the cold weather and only one in the summer, as it used to go sour. We would take the cream off and put it in a basin until we got enough to make butter, which we did about once a week, until our herd increased. We had a churn big enough to make about six pounds. We would take it up to the local store every Friday. We also had a few fowls and when we had any eggs to sell we would take them up also.

We would have to walk and carry them about a mile. The butter was made and put in pounds. Each pound was put in a small square piece of white rag, as there was no greaseproof paper then. Everything was done the hard way - there were no easy ways in those days. When we made the butter, we used to put it into a bucket and lower it into the tank to keep it firm before we started to carry it to the store. We had a big flat meat dish to carry it on tied in a large tea towel with two wet cloths around it. I can still see how some of it was after carrying it a mile in the hot weather.

So much for the butter - now the eggs. We had a biscuit tin - it would hold about six dozen. That would also be tied in a cloth to make it easier to carry. That was my job every Friday afternoon until later on we got a spring cart and then, if there was any horse to spare, I could have the cart. I can assure you, to have to carry butter and eggs one way and then carry groceries the other, it was rather arm aching, especially going up the two sand hills in the hot days and then across the open plains with no trees whatever to give you a chance to rest and cool off - so much for the butter and marketing.

Well, to start off again, our herd of cattle, including calves, young heifers and cows, amounted to seven or eight. I think if I remember, we had about three cows and a couple of heifers to come. The cows were Judy and she was a mottled one, neither white nor brown, then there was Lilly, a very quiet one. We could open her mouth and put our hand in - she would not attempt to bite - and walking along by her side we could lean our weight on her - she was quite contented. And there was Cherry, a red cow with crumpled horns, not so placid. When a young heifer came in, it was not the easiest thing to break her into milking, as we had no bail, so the next best thing to do was to get the cow as close to the fence as we could; near two posts, get a rope with a loop in it and also a long stick. The line

prop was generally got to put the rope around the stick and then to get the rope around her horns as best you could, which as a rule did not take long. And then pull the rope and drop the stick - as you pull the rope it would tighten around her horns and then pull her up to the post. And then the rope as tight as you could and as close to the post and then get another piece of rope and get around her right hind leg and then pull the leg rope as tight as you could to pull to another post, as they were only about 14 feet apart and then kneel down and milk your cow. I have had to do a good many. We used to milk them twice a day. If you were kind to them it did not take them long to get used to us, three or four days at the longest and then you could milk them anywhere.

Now, I must tell you what happened to Judy. By the way my, father and brothers called me Judy long before we had Judy, so I think it must have been where she got her name. Now, Judy was not a very placid cow. She never liked a fuss made of her and she never liked a dog near her or anyone to wave anything red. This happened on a Saturday afternoon ... it was raining and I made myself a new dress for working in. It was brown wincy - not very smart - and I also had a red apron trimmed with white ... and I went for the cows. There were about six of them. I took the dog with me, but, alas, Judy thought I was too smart. As soon as the dog began to bark to round them up, Judy went for me and all the other cows followed. I was soon in the midst of a lot of bellowing cows, the dogs barking. I ran and screamed out with fright, I fell down and they rolled me over. My father and one of my brothers heard me scream and looked and saw me being rolled and rolled over. Lucky for me, I was close enough for them to pull me through the fence. I still have two small marks on me, but they are not noticeable.

Now I will tell you how I used to feed the calves after we took them away from their mother, which we did when they were about 24 hours old. Well, we used to tie a piece of rope around their necks and put them in a little shed, where their mummy could see them but not get to them. We used to feed them three times a day to start for a week or two. We used to warm this milk and put it in a bucket, put one hand in the calf's mouth and hold its head in the bucket of milk and let it suck our fingers. After a day or two, we gradually pulled the hand out of its mouth and in another couple of days it would be drinking alone. Sometimes they would be a bit stubborn and suck too hard and you would get a good bite on your fingers. I have had many. I have broken in a good many heifers and also fed a good many calves. I did not mind it, as there was nothing else to do and we did not have any near neighbours. It was a daily routine and what you were brought up to you got used to.

As I am writing about cows, I might say in the early autumn, when there was not much feed about and after the first rains came - and they did not come just as they do now - the young grass grew very rapidly and there were no sheep about then. Being the only girl around home, I had to take the cattle out of the scrub and mind them on a plain about half a mile from home and try to keep them rounded up as far as possible while they fed very frequently ... that was my morning's work.

After having milked the cows I then fed the pigs. We had at times some eight or nine, sometimes more, sometimes less. Father generally used to kill one in the evening and let it hang outside all night. Then, in the morning he would cut it down, as you now see them in the butchers shop and then mother would cut it up into smaller pieces and salt them down. Of course, all our near neighbours would have a piece of roast pork and, when they killed, they would also send us over a piece, so in the winter time we generally had plenty of fresh meat. All the legs and hams and the sides of the pigs were salted down for bacon, which we would use during the summer months when we could not get fresh meat. And then there was all the fat to be rendered down and mother would pot or salt some butter and keep it in a big jar. Also, in the winter months father used to grow a lot of vegetables, but not in the summer, as there was no water and we had no garden in the summer. As I said before, we used to cart water for everything we had.

So, as time went on all our block was cleared and a fence was put around it. And father now put more time into the house. He made the house, which consisted of two rooms, into four rooms with upright pines plastered over with mortar, which was lime and sand mixed up with water just to make it workable. Then he hired a mason and had the two chimneys built and then we thought it was lovely. But there were no floors except dirt, so he bought enough boards to put a floor in one room and also enough boards to seal two rooms. We sewed bags together to seal the other two. I might say that there were no doors put up for a year or two, as there were too many other things to buy and, as long as we had shelter, we were satisfied and, I think, very happy in those days.

Nothing was ever done on Sundays, only what was very necessary, such as looking after and feeding the cattle. When we were youngsters my father used to read the bible to us, but as we grew up we read it ourselves. Sunday mornings we would ramble over the sand hills for a while to pick wildflowers and cranberries, which were very nice. We used to eat them and then take the flowers to church. It was a very pretty place then. Neighbours were few and far between, but all very friendly. We were all pioneers, all working for the same end and willing to help one another if necessary. And life seemed worth living. In the afternoon on Sundays we were sent to Sunday school. We had one and a half miles to walk each way and sometimes we would go to church in the evenings, but not very often, as mother and father could not do the walking and the

roads were rough and the nights dark. There was no horse available to us, as they had to work all the week and father thought they needed a rest on Sundays.

As time went on, two of my four brothers, the eldest being 23 now, got married and the other two were thinking about moving up north. There was a new district to be sold into blocks, about 150 acres in each. It was a government auction sale on lease. My father came to Adelaide and he was lucky enough to get two blocks, which were very heavily timbered at the time. That is nearly 69 years ago. The boys had our horses and wagon and took a lot of implements from home. Father and the boys went up there - it was called Wiltunga then, but now it is Bute. When they got up there, they dug a big hole in the ground, big enough for a large room about 15 feet deep, with stairs going down, almost like a cellar. The covered over the top with boughs they cut from trees and covered that over with earth to keep the rain out. They slept in that and had a table to have their meals on. It was very comfortable. They used to boil their billy outside and we girls at home, with mother's help, used to bake bread and cake during the week and they would take it up with them on Monday morning and they came home on Saturday night. If they were late in coming home, which was very often, we would go out and listen, as it was very quiet. There was no traffic after dark and we could hear the horses coming for a long time before they got home.

Well, eventually things got better. We got more wheat, butter and eggs. Every egg had to be sold. Although we had fowls, we never knew what it was like to have an egg. Well, as time went along, we got a little better off, my three oldest brothers married, my two sisters went to work and there was my youngest brother and I left at home. One of my sisters came to Adelaide and one went to Yarraroo Station. She worked there as a cook for five years for twelve shillings a week. There were two other girls there as well. My sister and one of the girls married and the other one stayed on for forty years until the original family died out. She is still alive and nearly 90 years old. I might say that both of my sisters are still alive; one is 85 and the other is 83. We were all together a few weeks ago. Well I think I am going off the track a bit.

While I was writing about the butter and eggs, I omitted to say that there was an egg collector who came around every fortnight as people got more fowls. They did not want to take them to the local stores, but sold them to the egg man. Sometimes we would get eight pence or nine pence a dozen. That was top price. But we sold many hundreds of dozens for three pence a dozen in the early spring when they were plentiful.

Well, as the family got small, there was not so much work to do. My father thought he would try his hand at something else. He went to the council. They were talking of making up the roads in several places where the water used to lay. The boys came and carted the stone for him and then he would go away all day, take his lunch with him and he would crack stones on the road. That was generally done before the winter, as he could not work on the roads if they were wet. He did that for several years. He got paid very well for that. When he could not do that, he would burn more lime and cart more stones. This time they would bring them to the home and he, being a handyman, built two small barns and a buggy shed and a long stone wall to keep the sand back from the house. Of course, all the shed property building had to be done in the spare time while the wheat was growing.

He bought some iron for the shed and, with them and the roof of the house, made a drain to catch all the water into a big tank that he made. When that was full of water, that kept us well supplied with nice, clean water, which we used to draw out with a bucket with a long rope. Sometimes the rope would break and we would go fishing. We had to get a long stick, the line prop generally, and a piece of wire attached, made like a hook, and fish for the bucket, which was retrieved after a while. And then we were happy once more, as a bucket lost was time also lost. Our nearest shop was a mile away and only a small one at that and sometimes you would be lucky to get a bucket, but otherwise you would have to wait several days, or perhaps a week, before the shopkeeper could get one. Then you would have to go to a neighbour to borrow one, as no one had a pump then.

Well, things went on mostly the same from week to week. We generally washed on Mondays and sometimes did the ironing in the evenings, especially in winter, as we always had to keep a fire in to keep us warm. We used to rub all the clothes on a washing board and boil them in a large boiler, as there were no coppers then. It would take all day to do the washing and the clothes got very dirty, especially the men's trousers, as they were all white moleskin and the shirts were blue with white stripes. They looked very nice when they started off Monday morning, but by night they were as the ones they were the previous week. It did not matter how dirty they got them the first day, they still had to wear them until Saturday night, as they were one of two pairs.

Father would never go out on Monday morning without his boots being cleaned. Of course, I had to do that, as well as clean boots for all hands Friday afternoon. We always cleaned the boys' boots on Friday for Sunday. They used to be elastic side boots, always black. We used to put the blacking in small cakes, which we had to soak in a saucer of water, put it on with one brush and let it dry and then polish it with another. It took rather a long time to do several pairs. We girls and mother had a kind of cloth boots, elastic

sides and a shiny piece of leather all round. That was our best boots - there were no shoes in those days. We wore lace-up boots the same as the boys, but not so heavy. What we put on in the morning, we kept on all day. It did not matter how wet we got our feet and stockings, we never changed them; they used to dry on us. It was a great wonder we were all so healthy, as we never seemed to be ill.

I remember one time we came home from school I had red spots all over my legs, but I had to go out and do my usual round about. It was chickenpox, but no one ever knew. I told no one about it, it never hurt me and I think mother kept me home from school for a few days, as the spots came out on my face. I forgot to say, when we had our boots we also had unbleached stockings for weekdays, but we always had a pair of white ones for Sundays.

Mother used to make all our clothes by hand, as there were no ready-made ones then. She used to make us unbleached calico shimmies and two pairs of drawers, as they were called. They used to have a band around the waist, with a buckle to keep them up. Bad luck for you if the buckle came off. There was more material in one leg than there is now in the whole garment. They were always as long as our dresses, which were down below our knees. We never went into corsets, until we were young women.

When I had to learn to crochet, I was shut up in a room. My sister could crochet and she had a piece of work around the bottom of her drawers and mother said I was not to come out until I could do it. It nearly came off one leg and then I could see the light of it, after I had pulled and pulled it, as I did not know the first thing about it. I got it at last and then I had to sew on the piece I had pulled off. I was allowed to go out.

After that I did not have any more spare moments, as when mother made our clothes and the boys' and father's shirts, I had to work all the button holes. When I went to school our mistress had two little girls and, as I was rather good at button hole making, she always kept her button holes for me to do in the sewing lesson. I did not mind it, but I always had a lot of button holes to do. And then to crochet for the legs of my drawers and I always did a narrow edging for the neck and sleeves for mother's nighties and chemise. She would not have any on her drawers, so we had a lot of sewing to do. I think it was good practice for me, as when my own family came along I had to do the same thing - as I will tell you later.

Well, now I will tell you that we always had one red flannel petticoat. It used to be about two yards wide at the bottom, in fact the same all the way up and then pleated into the waist with a band about one inch wide and a button and hole to fasten and then we had another petticoat on top of that. And then a dress with long sleeves and a pocket put into the seams. I do not know what the pocket was there for, as we never had any handkerchiefs, only one for Sundays and a piece of rag weekdays. We used to wear big sun bonnets during the week. We had one hat for Sundays. I remember one I had, it was a straw hat turned up at one side and lined with a blue shiny material and a big blue flower for trimming. In the summer I had a boater or sailor boy. It was black and white trimmed with blue ribbon. I had a brown dress trimmed with blue. My married sister made that. In return, I had to go out and mind her three children. She lived about three miles from home and I had to walk over to her place in the morning and back at night, as she had no place for me to sleep.

I might say she was always in a muddle. She used to wash on Mondays and it took her all day. She was very particular over her washing and she used to do the ironing the next Saturday night. She would start just before midnight and iron until the early hours of Sunday morning. They would get up about 9 o'clock and have breakfast and dinner in one. Her husband, being a Sunday school teacher, would go to Sunday school, a two mile walk each way. While he was away she would scrub her floor, which was flags, and then polish her furniture. She had three chairs, a table and lounge or couch - it was cedar - and she used to keep that very nice and get up Monday morning and start washing again. She thought she had a lot of work to do ... she only had two rooms and that went on for a year or two and then I was able to do some sewing.

Father bought a small sewing machine which he used to screw to the table and I started to make my best dresses and our aprons, which were made of brown holland. As much material in one apron as there is in a dress now. We generally had three aprons each. When I got efficient at that, I was allowed to help mother with the shirt making for the boys, as she was very near-sighted and could not manage the machine and I did it. It saved her a lot of sewing, as she used to make all their flannel shirts as well. And there was always an endless lot of button holes to work.

I made myself a white muslin dress once. It had a leg of mutton sleeves - don't I wish I had some snaps of them now, but there were no cameras about then. It was tight from the wrist up to the elbow and buttoned up at the back - another bunch of button holes to make. The skirt had a very wide piece of embroidery from the waist down past the knees and, for the neck, we had to buy a piece of ruffling the length of the neck of the dress. It was as stiff as a board and very rough; it used to come up around your chin. It was fashionable to have a red neck and often sore. We used to curl our hair with rags Saturday night. I was never any good at that. My sister or mother used to do that for me.

Sunday mornings, after we had roamed over the sand hills and picked a lot of wild flowers, we would start to get ready for Sunday school, as we always went right up to the time we were married. We would take down our curls

and brush them around a curl stick, which was the handle of an old umbrella. I could never do that either - my sister had to do that also. We had about 24 curls and then a piece of blue ribbon to tie it up. Like all other girls, we thought we were very smart and we were very happy and contented.

Well, things went on that way until we put our hair up. It was then done with a bun and a net over that and then we went into long dresses, but our boots never altered, except they were buttoned up instead of elastic. They had about one dozen buttons on each boot and they were everlasting coming off, as they were sewn on. So, we were kept busy sewing buttons - if it was not buttons, it was holes.

Well, time went on, as it always does, but it was much the same, but we were a little better off. Father bought a buggy and then we were allowed to take the buggy to church Sunday nights. Mother and father would go; it was much better than walking.

Well, as things went on, I grew up and became a woman. Someone came along one day and that was the end for me. We both fell for each other, much to my parents' disgust. And my leaving home to make a home for my own left them without any help for themselves. They never quite forgave me. Although I visited them several times, things were never the same. They were farmers and they thought all the family should marry farmers ... I did not think that way. Well, that is all over now. I have no regrets and, as far as I know, I have no enemies. I am at peace with the world. I hope to meet them in Heaven when God sees fit.

Sarah Jane Burton

Sarah's parents

George Philbey Born in England. Came to Australia on ship "The Sturge", married **Mary Ann Simmonds** at the Maid and Magpie Hotel. Had family of three sons and four daughters. George died aged 83 and was buried on 10 June 1913 by Pastor Warren at Kadina cemetery (path 37, block 18, grave 4). Mary Ann died aged 71 years and was buried on 26 August 1902 at Kulpara cemetery. George's second wife, Mrs Anthony, was buried at Kadina cemetery in 1920.

Children of George Philbey and Mary Ann Simmonds

Mary Anne Philbey. Married Joseph Edwards.

Harry Philbey. Married Sarah Boss.

Jack Philbey. Married Lillian (Harry Philbey's grandparents). **Eliza Anne Philbey.** Married John Daniel (Harry Philbey's grandparents).

Frederick George Philbey. Married Grace Sandery Magor. **Lucy Philbey.** Married Samuel Hilliard.

Sarah Jane Philbey. Born in 1869. Married **Harry Burton** at Holy Trinity church, Adelaide.

The family tree is in the Filby Association database.