

TAPE 3, SIDE B - Life on the fruit block

How did you find life on the land?

The first year was disastrous. We were married in May and We'd had a good crop the year before, but that year was that terrible frost, which you may have heard about, that took all the fruit – or practically all the fruit – in the Riverland and Barossa Valley, in October. And we lost almost all our crop. So that was a rather dreadful year. But we got by.

How did you manage?

Well, my husband and his brother – they didn't employ anyone. They picked all the fruit there was -which was only some late grapes – themselves, apart from enough ... I suppose there were enough apricots and raisins for the family – two families – and a few late grapes for the wineries. That was all they got that year. Of course everyone else was in the same boat. I don't know how we managed, really, except that Mother sent me a cheque every now and again. But we did. The shops gave us credit and when you sold a bit of fruit you went in and paid everyone you could. Even after that, the market was so shocking. You didn't get paid like they do now, when you put your fruit into the packing sheds. You didn't get paid until it was sold in England or wherever. When a cheque came you sat down and did sums and decided who you could pay and who you couldn't. We never got to the stage of being turned down by any of the shops though. Then later on in the Depression my husband began doing all this accountancy and got the fruit inspector's job and we were all right then.