



City of Subiaco
Subiaco Museum Oral History Collection
Oral History Transcript

Hazel Garton

Summary: Born in the house at 198 Barker Road, Hazel lived in the same house in Subiaco for her entire life. During this interview Hazel recalls some of her experiences living in Subiaco, including recollections of her childhood, her long-term support for the Subiaco Football Club, and changes she has seen in the area over time.

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This interview with Mrs Hazel Garton was conducted by Ken Spillman on behalf of the Subiaco Historical Society and the Subiaco City Council. It took place on the 11th August 1983 at Mrs Garton's home, 198 Barker Road, Subiaco.

Ken Spillman: Mrs Garton I understand that you were born in this house?

Hazel Garton: That's right.

KS: So that your family is one of the early pioneers of Subiaco.

HG: Yes my mother and father lived further up in Barker Road and my sister was only six when they came to live here. She's been dead since '45, she was 18 years old - so that was a long time.

KS: Do you remember what year.... Oh you wouldn't remember, you weren't born but do you know what year they came to Subiaco?

HG: Well I can work it out by my sister's age but I haven't done it. I should have done it.

KS: Was it before the turn of the century?

HG: Well what's the turn.... 1900. Yes it was after that.

KS: It was after that?

HG: Yes.

KS: Do you know why they came to Subiaco?

HG: Oh I think they lived in West Perth for many years and they just thought they'd like to come over here.

KS: Did you ever hear them talking about the differences between living in West Perth and Subiaco?

HG: No, not really.

KS: No. Did you think that there were any big differences at that time?

HG: Well I think West Perth was pretty old suburb that time.

KS: So it was like moving out into the sticks in a way?

HG: Yes, well there weren't too many houses in Subiaco. This house wasn't built when I first came here.

KS: Their first house in Subiaco - who built that?

- HG:** I don't know; they were just renting that one.
- KS:** They rented it and then did they contract somebody to build this house?
- HG:** No a chap, a bachelor chap built this house and he put it up for sale. He lived in it for a while - don't know how long though.
- KS:** So this house was virtually as it is today when your family moved into it?
- HG:** Well there have been alterations done on the better part of it.
- KS:** Was it a little smaller then was it?
- HG:** Oh it still had the verandah on the back but that's all been enclosed.
- KS:** And what were your first memories as a child of the houses around this area? Were there many other houses in the street?
- HG:** Oh there were quite a few, yes.
- KS:** And do you remember....
- HG:** They all seemed to be here in this street, if I can remember.
- KS:** In this street?
- HG:** This particular block was all houses.
- KS:** Do you remember any streets just nearby, near Barker Road that there were many vacant blocks?
- HG:** Up past Axon Street I remember a house getting built, third house up - but there are flats there now. That's vivid in my mind.
- KS:** Can you describe the sort of people that were living in the street in the early times?
- HG:** Well I think they were all.... they seemed old to me, I suppose they were young.
- KS:** They were about your parent's age?
- HG:** Yes.
- KS:** And do you think that they were fairly poor people?
- HG:** I think they were all just working class, not very well off.

- KS:** Were there some parts of Subiaco that were a little bit better off than others?
- HG:** Well there seemed to be nicer houses in Heytesbury Road and Nicholson Road.
- KS:** Were there any streets where there were perhaps poorer houses?
- HG:** Churchill Avenue used to be called First Street that seemed to be pretty old area, old, poorer people.
- KS:** And you would have, because you were born in this house, you would have grown up with a lot of other children in this area.
- HG:** Oh yes. I went to school with a lass that lived on the corner house and a couple of doors up.
- KS:** So there were a lot of children.
- HG:** Oh there were quite a few children around, yes.
- KS:** And can you tell me some of the things that you used to get up to, games and....?
- HG:** Well I think we used to play hopscotch in the streets.
- KS:** On the street. Was the street surfaced at that time?
- HG:** Bitumen on the footpaths.
- KS:** Barker Road was....
- HG:** Yes there was bitumen on the roads. Very hot, we had no shoes on.
- KS:** Did you used to go anywhere that you used to....?
- HG:** Well I think our outing was the pictures on Friday nights.
- KS:** At the Coliseum?
- HG:** At the Coliseum, yes. West Pictures.
- KS:** West's Pictures - was that different to the Coliseum?
- HG:** Yes West was where they built that Toyland now - that was West's Pictures. The Coliseum was on the corner where the Regal is.
- KS:** Can you tell me again where West's was?
- HG:** Where Toyland is built in Hay Street.

KS: In Hay Street.

HG: Nearly opposite the hotel. There was a picture theatre and gardens there - next door were gardens.

KS: And you used to go to the pictures about once a week?

HG: Always went Friday nights or Saturday afternoons.

KS: Was it a big family occasion?

HG: No we would go - the children, you know. Sixpence to go - penny to spend.

KS: Sixpence to go in?

HG: Yes. If you were rich you got thruppence to spend.

KS: Can you remember some of the kinds of movies that you used to watch?

HG: Well there used to be Hoop Gibson and horses and things.

KS: Cowboys and Indians?

HG: Cowboys, yes.

KS: What about any funny ones?

HG: Well there'd be Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton - things like that.

KS: And there was somebody playing the piano in the....

HG: Yes I just can't remember who played the piano [unclear]

KS: And what about other outings. Did you for example go for a swim?

HG: Picnics. We used to go to picnics at times to Nedlands' beach. The family used to go right down to Nedlands.

KS: You called it Nedlands' Beach did you?

HG: Just Nedlands I think.

KS: And you used to catch the tram there?

HG: Tram there. Yes the tram used to take you right round and you'd walk along and there were lovely trees and green grass and everything.

KS: Do you know about what time you're talking about now - would that have been in the twenties?

HG: Oh it'd be in the twenties.

KS: In the twenties. What about the other beach - did anybody ever go over to the ocean?

HG: Very rarely.

KS: Very rarely.

HG: We had no cars in those days.

KS: Yes so it was a very long way to go. Was there any way of getting there?

HG: As we got older when I got to about 14, we used to go out to City Beach by bus. There used to be a bus leave down by the pictures there. Go over the switch-back.

KS: And what did King's Park mean to you?

HG: Oh I used to love to walk up there Sunday afternoons.

KS: Was it always a great place to go?

HG: Oh it's always been a great place.

KS: And you used to walk in the bush?

HG: Not so much the bush, I think we used to keep to the main roads.

KS: A cleared area.

HG: Yes. Walk up King's Park Road and go through the main gates, you know.

KS: In your memory of Subiaco were there any tents around?

HG: No, can't remember any tents.

KS: In the early days of course they started off in tents and I was just wondering [unclear]

HG: No, I can't remember that.

KS: What about the method of rubbish disposal. Was there a rubbish collection every day?

HG: No I don't think so, once a week, I think. I think it was once a week.

KS: Run by the Council?

HG: Yes and the sewerage of course well you know they had to come around every week. Twice a week I think they used to come.

KS: There was a collection of sewerage twice a week.

HG: I think it was twice a week.

KS: And it was kept in pans wasn't it?

HG: Yes.

KS: Was there any worry about health in the [unclear]

HG: I don't think so.

KS: In the early days there was [unclear] of typhoid. Can you remember any cases of typhoid?

HG: No, not in that area.

KS: Can you remember any stables in Subiaco?

HG: Stoltsons, I think, had horses, you know, they used to have a grain place on the corner of Axon Street and Hay Street. I think they used to have stables there with horses for delivery.

KS: Were there many horses and carts around?

HG: Well the butcher used to deliver meat on a horse and cart - the bakers, horse and cart.

KS: Was that the most [unclear]

HG: Well the baker would come every morning with the bread at 7 o'clock - nice fresh bread. The baker took a [unclear]

KS: Would they charge any extra for delivery?

HG: There was no extra charge.

KS: So it was just as cheap as going to the shop?

HG: Yes, oh yes. I think now [inaudible]

KS: So really people didn't go to the shops all that much?

HG: Well my mother used to go Friday afternoons - to Kailis' which has been in Subiaco for many years - to give her order and they'd deliver it. [inaudible]

KS: Mrs Garton, we were talking about change a minute ago. I was wondering whether you'd be able to tell me what you think are the most important or significant changes in Subiaco?

HG: Well for one there's the Senior Citizens which I think is marvellous for lonely people where they can go most those days and play different things, cards and bowls and company and that.

KS: And most of those people in the Senior Citizens lived in Subiaco for quite some time.

HG: There are a lot of them that lived in Subiaco a long time. There are a lot of people that have come to live here, have their meals there.

KS: What do they think about the way Subiaco has changed? You were saying that you think, for example, Subiaco has changed quite a lot with the buildings and so forth.

HG: Yes well see the markets and the shopping and then all these town houses that are going up around the place.

KS: Is there any bad feeling about that?

HG: Well I'd like to see some places built for - like for me, I'm finding this a lot to keep going with the garden and that. But townhouses are no good for old people, up and down steps.

KS: Do you think they spoil the character of Subiaco?

HG: Well I think some of them. They're pushing too many on, you know, the blocks of land. Just over here there were three houses and they've got four units and three townhouses on the three blocks.

KS: What about the shopping area?

HG: And these two across here, there's one little house there and they built these two little....

KS: Yes I saw those.

HG: They were empty for nearly 12 months but they've been sold now.

KS: That's town houses. They're also doing a lot to houses - a lot of people are buying old houses.

HG: Yes well I think they do look nice done up too.

KS: Yes they do, they look lovely. But one thing that some people have complained to me about is the way that they are building big fences out in front so that you can't see them anymore.

HG: Yes well I think people are doing that for sound, don't you?

KS: The noise, the traffic.

HG: Yes. But I wouldn't like it because it shuts out all the breezes and things as far as I'm concerned.

KS: Yes. What about the shopping area, do you think that that's changed?

HG: I think we've got a good shopping area. I think a good cheap drapery shop would be nice - something like the K Mart or Target or something.

KS: And do you think it's.... I'm told that it was a very friendly type of area to shop at. Do you think it's still the same?

HG: No, I think the shops are changed because they're all too busy. They haven't got.... half the time they don't even say thank you when they take your money.

KS: Mmm, so really that's something that has changed.

HG: Yes well that's changed a lot. Not the personal service.

KS: And having lived in this house all your life you would have seen a great deal of change just in the street itself and the type of people living there.

HG: Oh yes, the people have changed. Not too many left of the old ones now.

KS: Do you think they're a different sort of person or just younger?

HG: Well younger people.

KS: What about kids?

HG: Oh there are no children in this block.

KS: And when do you think that changed?

HG: I don't know. I think you'd be able to get that answer from the school more than anything.

KS: Yes, yes but it's been quite some time since there were young families in [unclear]

HG: Oh yes.

KS: Just going back to the street now, I meant to ask you earlier about Mr Doyle. I understand that Mr Doyle who was the first Mayor of Subiaco [unclear]

HG: No, I don't know.

KS: Or the Doyle family at all?

HG: No.

KS: No. It's a bit of a mystery to me they seem to have moved off and....

HG: Yes I have never even heard that name before.

KS: Well just before we finish I'd like you to say something about how you think Subiaco has developed in comparison to other areas. You mentioned West Perth before and that is an older area.

HG: Yes.

KS: And there are also newer areas on the other side like Daglish and Jolimont. Do you think there's a big difference between.... do you think Subiaco's got its own identity or do you think really it's all been merged into....?

HG: Oh no, I think Subi's got its own identity.

KS: You don't think that West Perth is similar at all?

HG: West Perth is taken up mostly by commercial isn't it? Professional.

KS: Not people who live there.

HG: No.

KS: What about Daglish then that's part of....

HG: Well Daglish to me has always been no man's land because you got to come over to Subiaco to shop. I think the railway line also seems to divide suburbs.

KS: That's interesting because you know people say that the City of Subiaco is divided by the railway and there's Jolimont and Daglish on the other side. Do you think that a lot of Subiaco people have felt that they are separate?

HG: Well you feel different, I don't know. You know Daglish belongs to Subiaco but it's just over the line isn't it. We nearly went into a house in Daglish. We put in for a State Housing house in Daglish which was down by the Nicholson Road Subway and came just as my husband got called up to go and you know.... And my father was still alive so we just didn't bother to shift so I'm still here. Many years ago.

KS: What about the maintenance of this house. It's obviously in beautiful....

HG: Well I've just had it painted out - mostly painted out. Well this room wasn't done [unclear] And I've had all the outside painted. And I've had the toilet brought up into the bathroom.

KS: So it does require a lot of work?

HG: Well it won't get done again in my lifetime now I don't think.

KS: Oh so this is it. A once every 25 years or something.

HG: Well my husband used to keep it well painted up but it's got a bit neglected - I was on my own I lost a bit of interest. I was going to shift and I didn't want to shift from Subiaco and I didn't want to go into a town house. The best was to spend it on here and stay here. A lot of places you can't take your piano. Got to have a big room for a piano. I decided I would stay here now.

KS: What other people have done they've just done up their house.

HG: A lot of young people have bought them and spent a lot of money on them.

KS: Do you think that's a good thing for Subiaco in the long run?

HG: Oh I think so, yes.

KS: So what do you think of the future for Subiaco? Do you think it will retain its identity or perhaps lose it?

HG: I think the young people - there will be a lot of young ones come here to live. See as the old people die well you're losing your identity there aren't you.

KS: So it will become any old area do you think?

HG: Oh no I don't think so.

KS: They will still keep some of its identity.

HG: Oh yes.

KS: So what you're saying is that these young people who are moving in will raise their families in the area.

HG: Oh I think so because....

KS: And will keep it the same.

HG: They all think Subiaco is trendy. I was talking to a lady and [unclear] brought me home from football. She said, "Oh my daughter would love to live in Subiaco, she thinks it's so trendy." I thought I've trying to get out of it for years. I don't want to go out to Wanneroo or that way. You know I couldn't find anywhere I wanted to go that was so handy really.

KS: You mention going to the football - have you been interested in football?

HG: Oh yes I've been a football fan.

KS: You follow Subiaco?

HG: Yes. My brother was secretary there for a few years.

- KS:** Can you tell me something about what it's been like to follow Subiaco over the years?
- HG:** Very heart breaking. But they used to play good football.
- KS:** What time are you talking about?
- HG:** Well I'm going back since I was a child, a teenager and we used to go to the football with mother and father. Then my husband was interested in it - we used to go.
- KS:** Can you remember any of the Subiaco heroes in the football clubs?
- HG:** Oh yes, Laurie Kettlewell [?] and Reggie Hampson and all those.
- KS:** I remember Reg Hampson.
- HG:** Because I used to play at the dances - football dances.
- KS:** Oh really. Now I can remember the teams when Haydn Bunton....
- HG:** Haydn Bunton, yes.
- KS:** And then later on [unclear]
- HG:** Bill Alderman and Keith Shae.
- KS:** Did Bill Alderman play for Subiaco?
- HG:** Bill Alderman played for Subiaco, yes.
- KS:** And when do you think the Subiaco Football Team was at its greatest that you can remember?
- HG:** Well the best year I can remember was 1959; it was a good year. We just got beaten in the grand final - '73 we won.
- KS:** And for somebody who had followed Subiaco for so long and that was their first premiership in 49 years it must have been a great thrill.
- HG:** Oh yes, my brother cried. He wasn't secretary then, he'd retired. I think we all nearly cried for joy.
- KS:** Were you there?
- HG:** Oh yes.
- KS:** Can you remember any celebrations after?

HG: Unfortunately I had to go out and play that night but there were great celebrations on the oval that night. But 1959 when we lost the premiership - East Perth beat them on the grand final, they had a dance band out on the oval and I was playing for that. [unclear]

KS: [unclear]

HG: Oh everyone - there was plenty of drink around.

KS: Forget about [unclear]

HG: Freezing cold. The music out on the oval.

KS: And I suppose you would never give away Subiaco no matter what?

HG: I couldn't follow any other team, I just don't go.

KS: And what are your hopes then for the football?

HG: Well we all hope next year that they will do better. We say that every year.

KS: Yes. Oh well all the best and thank you very much for talking to me.

END OF INTERVIEW

INDEX

A

Alderman, Bill 12
Axon Street 3, 7

B

bakers 7–8
Barker Road 2-4
 house no. 198 2
beaches 5–6
Bunton, Haydn 12
butchers 7

C

children 4-5, 9
Churchill Avenue (formerly First Street) 4
cinemas 4–5
City Beach 6
Coliseum Theatre 4

D

Daglish 10

E

entertainment 4–5

F

First Street (later Churchill Avenue) 4

G

games 4

H

Hampson, Reggie 12
Hay Street 4-5, 7
Heytesbury Road 4
hopscotch 4

K

Kailis' 7
Kettlewell, Laurie 12
King's Park 6
King's Park Road 6

M

markets 8
movies 4–5

N

Nedlands, beach at 5
Nicholson Road 4, 10

P

pianos 5, 11
picnics 5
pictures 4–6

R

railway line 10
rubbish disposal 6-7

S

Senior Citizens centre 8
sewerage collection 7
Shae, Keith 12
shopping 7-10
stables 7
Subiaco
 compared to West Perth 2, 10
 future of 11
 trendiness of 11
 as working class suburb 3
Subiaco Football Club 11–13
Subiaco Oval 13

T

theatres 5
town houses 8
trams 5

W

West Perth 2
 compared to Subiaco 2, 10
West's Picture Theatre 4–5