

Gawler Oral History Project

EPHRAIM HENRY COOMBE

Helen Hennessy talks with **Patricia Booth** (nee Coombe) and discusses a book they are currently writing about the life and times of E.H.Coombe.

Their discussion took place in the Gawler Civic Centre in June 2019 and the transcript of their talk is as follows.

Helen: Good morning. My name's Helen Hennessy and I'm interviewing Patricia Booth. Just before we start though, the topic that we're going to talk about is a gentleman called Ephraim Henry Coombe.

He's a person that Patricia and I have been doing some research on together, and I'll just give you a bit of an overview of his life. There's obviously much more detail that will come out when we do get our book together Patricia.

He was born in 1858 here in Gawler to Mary and Ephraim Coombe. Both of his parents were immigrants from England, and Mary was actually a granddaughter of John Reece, another important person in Gawler's history. Sadly, Mary died when Ephraim Henry was just five and his younger brother was two. Ephraim, the father, married again to Elizabeth Tall from Willunga and she becomes an important part of the story.

Ephraim Henry attended Mr Burton's school in what is now St George's Hall in Gawler and, as was usual for that time, his formal schooling ended at 11 and he went on to work for James Harris in his general store. From there he returned home to help his father at the Willaston General Store and Post Office. So, he comes from a grocer background. Ephraim Henry married at 21 and soon after he had his son, first of about a family of six. He was made a partner in the family business but within a few years set off to run his own confectionery business in Murray street, just opposite where we are now in the Gawler Institute. Probably with encouragement of the same person, Mr. Burton, he continued to self-educate and he went on to learn shorthand, typing and accounting, probably in the evenings when he was running his shop. As a result though, by 30 he'd become a corresponding journalist enhancer reporter for the city newspaper, which was called The Register.

Ephraim Henry was an active community member and networker and belonged to a wide range of organizations offering all three of his secretarial and auditing skills to them. By 1890 he had become the editor of the Bunyip, the local newspaper here in Gawler, and this was a position he held for nearly 25 years. During this time he became increasingly interested in politics, supporting candidates and organizing public education opportunities so that the general voters could learn a bit more about the whole process of politics and elections. In 1896 just six years later, he himself stood in the State Seat for Barossa.

He was unsuccessful on his first bid and again he was unsuccessful in 1899, but in 1901 when the long-time local member, Sir John Downer transferred to the new Federal Government, Ephraim Henry won the resultant election. He went on to hold the seat for 11 years across five elections, and he was actually a minister in the Price-Peake Government. He was elected as a liberal, as opposed to a conservative, but he was always a "small l" liberal. In 1910 he was elected as an independent democratic union member, but when they amalgamated with the liberal union, he refused to sign the page for the merger. And as a result, he suffered defeat in the 1912 election and was out of parliament for three years.

In 1914 Ephraim Henry left Gawler and The Bunyip and joined the Daily Herald newspaper, and that was the paper that was put out by the Trades Hall. In 1915 when he returned to the Parliament he did so as a Labor candidate. When the Great War commenced Prime Minister Billy Hughes indicated he wished to bring in conscription. Ephraim Henry fiercely opposed this move and travelled around country towns extensively speaking against it. He was brought to court on two occasions and fined for using words likely to prejudice recruiting. While speaking at a rally in Semaphore in April 1917 he had a seizure and died later that week. The bitterness and ill-feeling had taken its toll. So! It gives us a bit of a brief overview.

Helen: Hello Patricia. Can you introduce yourself.

Patricia: Yes. I'm Patricia Booth, and I was Patricia Coombe, and Ephraim Henry Coombe was my great grandfather. His second son James Coombe was my grandfather and I lived with my grandparents from the age of two until I was twenty-four, when I got married. So, I had a long association with Ephraim Henry Coombe through my grandparents.

Helen: What do you remember from those conversations?

Patricia: Oh well, mainly, he must have been a good family man because my grandparents talked about him with much respect and also a certain amount of loving there was a lovingness there that you could tell and I heard so many stories as a little girl sitting around the family lunch table on a Sunday after the roast having big conversations with other members of the family. And they were all political conversations ...arguments occasionally, and I learnt a lot from that. So, that when I started school and we had general knowledge classes I always topped them because I knew so much and, of course, I was quite big headed about it ... and very spoilt.(laughter). But I certainly came to understand that Ephraim Henry Coombe was somebody to be admired.

Helen: Can you remember a particular story that always seemed ... amazing?

Patricia: Oh! We used to eat at his table. We used his table to eat from. We used his sherry glasses on Sunday to have our sherry before the main meal. And scattered all through the house were framed photos of him in the Peake Government, and there was a big Rechabite thing so he must have been the Grand Master of the Rechabites at some stage. I was very impressed with all this.

Helen: So, he was kept alive in the family?

Patricia: Oh yes. He was always kept alive. Very much. And my grandfather he was very politically active himself and actually loved to have an argument about politics. (laughter) So we all do too. Even now.

Helen: Your grandfather would he have gone across and served in the war as well? Several of Ephraim Henry's sons did serve ..

Patricia: Yes, they did. Harry the eldest who tragically died quite early after enlisting and going overseas. Ernest came back injured and Samuel, who they called Walt, he came back and hadn't suffered any injuries other than being drummed out (laughter).

Helen: So, let's stop and run through

(Helen and Patricia talking together) ... the eldest son was Harry Hayward Coombe. Second son is your grandfather James Bright Coombe, then Ernest Hiscock, there was Daisy, Neville and Catherine Helen Spence.

Helen: They honoured previous family members in the naming of the children.

Patricia: Yes. They are all family names. A James Bright of course was one of Ephraim seniors' best friends. So that was why the second son was named James Bright I would imagine.

Helen: And you say that the family continues that today using family names.

Patricia: Yes. I'm Patricia Fraser after my great grandmother and my father was James Hayward ... and Stuart is a name that is in the family as well.

Helen: So, a family that continues that type of tradition.

Patricia: Yes. My grandson is James.

Helen: Excellent. So, how did we meet Patricia?

Patricia: Oh! That was marvellous. That was the best gift I've had I think. For years and years, I use to say; "I'm going to write a book about Great Grandpa." And everybody would go; "Hoh! ... Yes! ... Hmmm!". (laughter) And then, by some strange coincidence at the History Month celebrations at St Peter's Town Hall sitting next to me was Karen Redman, and she introduced herself in her usual happy way ... and I did too ... and then she said she came from Gawler ... and I said; "Oh yes Gawler, my Great Grandfather came

from Gawler" "Oh, who was he?" she said "Ephraim Henry Coombe" "Oh!" she says " I know about him". And I nearly died. Because I didn't think anybody knew about him except me. And strangely enough a couple of weeks later there was another function at St Peters, and she came along with this chirpy person and she said; "You'll be interested to meet Helen Hennessy because she's also interested in Ephraim Henry Coombe". And since then we've been bosom buddies and talked about him endlessly, and I've learnt so much from Helen and she has been so supportive of my cause it's been wonderful.

Helen: It was amazing. It really was. Because my interest goes back to 1985 when we first came to Gawler ... and he has always been there on the edge a person of interest who was he as a person?

Patricia: And you lived in his house.

Helen: That's right and that's how it started for us. By chance I learnt soon after we arrived in Gawler that we were living in the family house. The house next to the Willaston General Store and Post Office. So, I've got little notes over thirty years that I have been collecting ... but once we met together we could do that ... and two people are always better than one. So, we have. We called it a project didn't we. It was more than just a book.

Patricia: Yes. It's a project. because the "Walk" came as a result of the interest in it. And we have done some talks and things about it, and I think Ephraim Henry Coombe has become much better known. When I first researched him in Trove it was very difficult to find articles about him, but the more I persisted the easier it became, and it became obvious that the Ephraim Henry Coombe file was growing in Trove, and people were becoming more interested in it.

Helen: We keep finding little red herrings don't we. He was very much part of his community wasn't he. And you created a list of all the community organisations which was more than a page full.

Patricia: Yes. A page and a bit. And if you read the book he wrote; The History of Gawler, he was not shy of putting in everything that he did, which he had to do, really, because without it there would have been a big gap. But he was certainly in everything. What he didn't start he joined.

Helen: He was both a good community member, and he probably needed to do it through his journalistic requirements, but he was also a consummate networker. I mean, really, he could quite easily make connections across

Patricia: You could see he wasn't shy making himself known to people.

Helen: But still ... his ego didn't come forth. He was a genuine person.

Patricia: I don't think he had an ego because with all his good works and commitments he had when he died he only left an estate of 2300 pounds which, even in today's terms, is a bit of money but it's not what you would expect from someone who had been so prominent in public life.

Helen: And we found he only owned property reasonably late in his life as well. So coming from well his father in Devon was a farm worker and came here and took up in a retail business.

Patricia: He was just a labourer in Devon.

Helen: One of the themes is that he continued to self-educate. Having left school at 11 he went on and did all these things. Has that continued in the family do you think?

Patricia: Oh yes. When you read *The History of Gawler* the same names appear over and over again. One; it was a very small community, but Two, they had to do this for themselves ... to educate themselves like the School of Mines. I mean to start a School of Mines in a place like Gawler seems a bit odd, but they had the backing of the University, and it ended up being quite a very important course.

Helen: Absolutely ... and supported by the foundries and everything else. It was very much a self-help society. The term, "*The colonial Athens*", because it became the whole self-education, respect of culture and the Gawler Institute again comes into that as well.

Patricia: Very much.

Helen: Well! What interesting experiences have we had along the way? You actually got a chance to address the Labor Party in Gawler didn't you? (laughter)

Patricia: Yes. You know right from the start of his public life you could sense that he was interested in the working man, and the dropouts ... the ones that were not doing very well. Because one of his platforms was, in 1896 I think - or was it 1899, to increase the cost of wheat by the bushel .. the tax .. to compensate for putting the fares down for students and the working class so that they could go to Adelaide to

Helen: This is on the train?

Patricia: Yes. On the train - and those were some of the things he was very keen on improving. And when you read Hansard he was very aware of the fact that he was living in a district that grew wheat, that had wonderful crops of wheat in the good years, that German farmers were making wine and things like that. When they made him Minister for Agriculture it was actually the right thing for him to be because he was interested in all that.

He wanted the train to come through to Angaston. He fought very hard to get the train because he realized that the growers needed it. I think he was a man of his time in many respects.

Helen: And again he was well connected through all the strata's. I mean when you think back to the Grocery he would have been selling groceries and all the equipment that goes with it to all of those farmers

Patricia: That's right ... and seeing them go past ...

Helen: Absolutely ... and talking to them ... and knowing when they went through good times and bad times and what it really took to

Patricia: He didn't just listen, he learnt as well and that was the reason I think he entered politics in the beginning, because he could see the need for it ... to be a representative of the town. Sir John Downer was a man of great repute and influence, but he was coming to the end of his period when he had been effective, and now he was really only interested in the federal sphere ... that it needed someone like my great grandfather to stand up for the South Australian's and particularly the people in the Barossa. And of course, during the War (*WW1*) he was called a "German lover" because he fought against the German schools being closed, and he fought very hard for the German settlers here who, after all, were living here. They weren't living in Germany. They certainly

Helen: No. By this stage

Patricia: They were Australian. Very much.

Helen: Yes. And that extended into the Barossa .. the impact .. it was Lutheran Schools in the Mid North as well. Yes. So, the Memorial to E.H. Coombe lies where?

Patricia: In Tanunda (chuckles) ... because it was the people of Tanunda who clubbed together and said we have got to do something ... and it took 30 yearsin 1930 well 23 years before it actually took place. And they had to get public subscriptions for the monument, and then there was a lot of discussion because they put on it that he was crucified. The word "crucified" did not go down well with a lot of people, but they stuck to it and would not let go of that word.

Helen: And that sits where in Tanunda?

Patricia: In Murray Street about two thirds of the way up on the left hand side.

Helen: It's quite imposing isn't it?

Patricia: It is.

Helen: One of my curiosities was .. where is the memorial to him in Gawler? We've decided that the memorial to him in Gawler is ? (chuckles)

Patricia: Gawler.

Helen: Yes. And it's the history book which everyone still very much knows.

Patricia: And it's a very interesting read even though it's full of rather imposing frightening people. (laughter) ... with great beards.

Helen: We were very lucky because again he was an editor and he was in a prime situation to ...

Patricia: Oh yes. He was editor of the Bunyip for nearly 25 years. So he had the town of Gawler well and truly in his blood.

Helen: One of the things we have both learnt is that he must have had really good support from Sarah, his wife.

Patricia: Yes. Yes. She was on a lot of committees ... especially dealing with children and mothers and things like that. And that is the area where women did have some influence. She was very tall and imposing according to my grandmother, and she could make her presence felt ... very well ... yes.

Helen: We came across a wonderful photo recently which has her in it. Actually it has the whole family in it.

Patricia: And she is certainly very regal looking isn't she.

Helen: She is. And a bit taller we suspect than Ephraim.

Patricia: I'd say quite a lot taller.

Helen: He is very much like a ... he is a short person.

Patricia: My grandmother had a lovely story about Aunty Daiz. Aunty Daiz was a bit of a character and rebel. And grandma was engaged at the time to grandpa and came for a visit. During the night Daiz jumped out of the window and went off goodness knows where. Mrs Coombe came down the passage and said; "Are you girls alright?" My grandmother was absolutely terrified she would come in and ask ... "Well where's Daiz?" (laughter) And she'd shiver in the bed for the rest of the night.

Helen: Where would that house have been?

Patricia: I reckon that must have been "the Burrows". It was 1908 when they got married.

Helen: So that's the house up in Willaston ... the Burrows Street one.

Patricia: Yes. So, I think they were up there.

Helen: We've also recently located the house in North Adelaide which has been a big surprise.

Patricia: In Kingston Terrace.

Helen: Which is a lovely thing and, again, we have been very fortunate that there is so much online that we have been able to use the Land Titles to figure that one out.

Patricia: And during History Month we walked past it on one of our North Adelaide walks ... and I had great pleasure in saying that's my great grandfather's house.
(chuckles)

Helen: So we have made lots of discoveries. We've located the house in Finnis St that he and Sarah must have moved to once they left Willaston. I mean they ended up having four or five children in that house and it's only a cottage. But again, it's close to where he would have worked in the Bunyip. It would have been a walk down the hill to there.

Patricia: And also when they had the shop, the confectionary shop in Murray Street, I mean that was a big step going from working for his father to going out on his own ... and into confectionary which seems a bit odd but, it certainly made it possible for him to be seen more.

Helen: We found out that your grandfather was actually born in that house so there must have been a residence behind. All of these shops would have had residences behind.

Patricia: When he was standing for parliament in 1899 (and was unsuccessful) he was at a public meeting and a woman called out; "What would you know about politics you've got a lolly shop". And he said; "Yes, and they were jolly good lollies".(laughter)

Helen: As we go along and we do more research confectionary does seem a little odd. But it's of its time and it is connected to all the other businesses in town. So it's actually connected to the mills we had, and the brewing, and cordial production we had in the town. We'll leave that there because that's part of the industrial history of Gawler and part of the rising situation that was happening in the town where you could afford to buy sweets.

Patricia: And obviously confectionary was a line of business that women could have because I found that bit about Mrs Hayward who was a confectionary had a confectionary shop in Victoria and it looks as though women ...

Helen: Absolutely. Coming from that cooking background. His stepmother came from that background so it's something ... its manufacturing, its production that can be done on a home scale really. And the list of things that was classified as confectionary was everything from glace fruits to cordials ... it's a very large range of additional foodstuffs that a growing economy can cope with.

Patricia: And she could do it on the kitchen stove.

Helen: And what other interesting things have we discovered?

Patricia: It would have been very interesting to live here. Like you said they called it "the colonial Athens" and it seems, reading in the Bunyip of the time, that they would have a social at the drop of a hat. They had a social when he didn't get in. They had a social when

he did get in. And when he got kicked out in 1912 they gave him another social. He was a chess champion so that required another presentation and a social. I mean I think it was pretty common to have socials for a mouse running across the road basically. (laughter)

Helen: And it was often here in the Institute. There must have been multiple functions in Gawler every night of the week.

Patricia: And he was interested in the theatre because we found a lovely programme didn't we from a production that he attended. He was the guest of honour.

Helen: So again improving his ... you can see how he is building up his public speaking. So yes, he was a shop keeper but ... he was building his skills.

Patricia: Yes, that's right.

Helen: And eventually standing up in Parliament and making speeches. Someone in one of his obituaries talked about him being a "plodder" which today I think has a negative connotation.

Patricia: But it didn't in those days.

Helen: No, it's more a he's a step by step improvement person.

Patricia: I always saw him as a "joiner". He joined everything that was going. The only things he never had anything to do with was any gambling or drinking because he was a teetotaler and Wesleyan Methodist. So gambling and drinking and racehorses would not have been in his lexicon at all. (laughter)

Helen: But he wasn't against those who did. He just personally didn't. I mean he mixed with lots of people.

Patricia: And my grandfather use to say ... and he was a teetotaler ... he could go to the pub and have a lemonade and stand up with the best of them and didn't feel out of place at all.

Helen: So it wasn't that he didn't like people ... it's just that was his ... yes he very much mixed with people ... getting on with them.

Patricia: Well he had some sherry glasses.

Helen: There you go. (laughter) So the churches we talked about on our walking tour. We've actually been able to talk about some places and there are at least three churches the family has connections with.

Patricia: That's right .. the little one where Mary and Ephraim senior got married. And then the one at the top of the hill .. at Willaston .. and what was the third one?

Helen: I guess the latest one is the Todd Street Church which has taken over from the Wesleyan.

Patricia: And they were both little churches weren't they.

Helen: They are and when father Ephraim first came he actually went to a church at Gawler River didn't he?

Patricia: Yes, that's right. It was slightly different "something Bible" I think.

Helen: Again, all part of the Methodist faith.

Patricia: We wondered how Ephraim senior married Elizabeth who came from down south and we came to the conclusion that they got married at Bowden ... and that was through their Wesleyan minister who happened, by some strange chance, not only to be the pastor down at McLaren Vale but, hello!, he came up here to Gawler too found a man that had two little children and no wife ... and thought "aha! ... I know where we can find one.

Helen: And Elizabeth was relatively elderly.

Patricia: She was wasn't she?

Helen: In her forties by that stage. So she migrated also from England and had spent, I think, thirteen years with Samson Tall and his wife, who I think was also an Elizabeth. So thirteen years down at McLaren Vale and at 42 she comes here and marries a man a little younger than herself ... he's got two small children ... and fits in perfectly and raises those children. In fact when she dies Ephraim Henry, who wrote her obituary, described her as his mother.

Patricia: It's rather sad to think that neither of the two boys would have very good memories of their mother. The younger brother was only two. So his memories of his mother would be almost nil.

Helen: And we do know that Mary and the boys had a sister who died.

Patricia: Anne Elizabeth.

Helen: That's right. They are commemorated in the Pioneer Park.

Patricia: Yes that was sad. But so many had second marriages. If you go through History Month and read up ...

Helen: Oh yes. The whole public health and the danger of childbirth.

Patricia: And sanitary conditions because, you know, the toilet system wasn't all that flash.

Helen: And there was no antibiotics. In fact the child that Ephraim Henry and Sarah had ... they did lose a child ... just under a year of age. It was whooping cough. There was a cousin Thomas who lost a little boy about the same age. So at a time when there was no vaccinations to prevent it ... and once they had it the treatment was basically keep them

warm and so sadly ... to lose a child. They had seven children and six lived to adult hood.

Patricia: And he was a busy man.

Helen: It seems frenetic. Obviously he enjoyed mixing with people and Sarah kept the home front going. But as you said once he became a member of Parliament she came out and started to join organisations. There's a couple of times where she is representing him at community functions because he has been unable to make it. So slowly she emerges as well. We are making a particular effort to try and find as much about her

Patricia: Its suffragette year this year so we have to look on the woman side of things particularly.

Helen: We know that women's temperance was very strong.

Patricia: Yes that's right and he was very friendly with Catherine Helen Spence. That's why he named his youngest daughter after her. She came up here and spoke at one of his election rallies when he was trying to get elected.

Helen: And also with her voting form too. He was a star of that wasn't he.

Patricia: Well, she wanted effective voting and so did he. He spoke quite a lot about effective voting and women's voting. I'm not sure originally he was very from reading Hansard I'd say the Woman's Vote wasn't the important thing in his life ... or Women's Rights didn't play a big part. He was a fairly egalitarian type person. He believed everybody was equal. But, of course, in those times the woman still stayed at home and looked after the children and did the cooking.

Helen: But again he learnt ... he adapted ... he got on board. He was quite happy to educate himself and develop and change his mind. We've also found that his father Ephraim signed the suffragette petition in 1894.

So it can be very confusing ... because in fact there were three Ephraim Coombes. There was Ephraim Henry. That is why we keep referring to him. There was his father Ephraim. And there was a great uncle Ephraim who was from the Walkerville North Adelaide area as well. We can get a little confused. It's about trying to track down where they came from.

Patricia: And actually it was great uncle Ephraim that really got him going because he left him 200 pounds in his will. So that's how he managed to start the little confectionary shop we think. Don't we.

Helen: There were Coombe's here. There was uncle Ephraim. There was also another.

Patricia: Anne

Helen: Who was Anne?

Patricia: (chuckles) Anne was Ephraim's sister. His father's sister. And they had the Wheatsheaf Hotel and we think the relationship between Anne and the rest of the Coombe's may have been a little frosty because, of course, they didn't believe in drink. And Anne and her husband, Samuel Pope, they had the Wheatsheaf hotel.

Helen: So lots of there was family networking even there and then when we look at who was married in to the family ... the connections as well ... he was very well connected in to the community.

Patricia: He certainly was and it is interesting, talking about connections, when you read Hansard, how the names Downer and Lucas and Butler you know these names that keep popping up ... still today ... exactly in the same way ... and when you read Hansard now it's like ... as they say ... Groundhog Day. It's the same again. The same stories.

And I was fascinated with the train story because there was a fuss about the "no right hand turn" for the tram going down North Terrace and lo and behold I'm reading that they were thinking of getting rid of the horse trams and putting in electric trams and there was a great outcry. "No! We like our horse trams." (chuckles) So things don't really change in many respects.

Helen: And I can remember many years back Mrs Dawn Eastick, who was married to Bruce Eastick, who was twice our Mayor here in Gawler but also our MP ... and Dawn's connection was from the Riggs family ... and she was helping research a book there ... and she explained very early where Ephraim Henry sat in that family as well. So it's very we are a small State and we have strong connections and we keep coming across people ... and so, the book will be focussed on Ephraim Henry and the family but, also, the community ...

Patricia: The wider community.

Helen: Yes. He actually lived here. So he lived till he was fifty ...

Patricia: Eight

Helen: So 56 of those years he was here in Gawler. So trying to explain what it was like to be here ... how it was connected ... as you say ... it will have a fairly long index of names and places and organizations.

Patricia: That's right. It's interesting. I found the School of Mines thing absolutely fascinating because it started out so small and they managed to encourage lecturers to come from the School of Mines in Adelaide ... and the University. And I didn't realise that he was a very brilliant student. That was another aspect of his life that very little is known about , but

Helen: Continuous education. And encouraging others. Even when he was in Parliament .. the opportunities for people who often left school early ... that was how it happened ... not too many people had the opportunity. But to do night classes .. and to do special opportunities .. to continue to learn.

Patricia: And I think he would have been a fiery personality. I think he was very emotional and rather fiery and didn't mind answering back. And that's been handed down to all of us. (chuckles).

Helen: He was very interested in the Institute's committee wasn't he? So what we found was not only Gawler ... he went on didn't he?

Patricia: Yes. He was the editor of the magazine for three or four years. Quite a long time. And his articles are full of little quips and side bits ... little jokes and a lot of gossip as well. And I noticed that when he stopped and the next person took over all those lovely little quips and things disappeared. And I thought it's now turned into a dry document. It's not as interesting to read because I kept writing down the jokes because I thought they were fantastic.

Helen: Is that the articles in the Bunyip?

Patricia: No, the articles in the Institute Magazine.

Helen: Oh ok!

Patricia: Yes. I spent ages in the Summerville Room reading all these jokes and writing them down. They were so good.

Helen: So you can tell that the tone completely changes? Because when he finished being editor here in Gawler Robert Barnett, because the Bunyip was owned by the Barnett's for a very long time .. and he had worked with Robert for all of those 24 years .. and Robert had been the manager, looked after the production of the paper. And Robert stepped up to become the editor. So, I haven't done as much reading on that as you but I think there would be a slight change in tone there. But because they had worked so closely together I think it would have been easier for Robert to continue in the style ...

Patricia: Yes. He wrote in a; "I'm talking to you" attitude rather than "I'm telling you something".

Helen: Yes. Very much entwined at entry, and conversational.

Patricia: More conversational than a closed discussion.

Helen: Ok. What else? Is there anything we have particularly missed?

Patricia: I don't think so. I think we have covered him pretty much.

Helen: Lovely. Well we are continuing to work on the project. (laughter) We have got, as you say, a lot of interest from a lot of people. We are trying to bring the book together. We are up to an interesting area aren't we? We are looking at that period about conscription .. the anti-conscription .. and the toll that it must have had.

Patricia: Not only he, but a lot of politicians were going around talking about it ... both anti and pro ... and it reads like a geography map of South Australia. Terowie, down the South

East, Millicent, Mt Gambier ... and it was horse and buggy in a lot of cases I guess. Peterborough, the Mid North and up further ... even Broken Hill. Because when he died there was quite a big obituary in the paper at Broken Hill. So his influence extended quite a long way.

And I think the two court cases would have had quite a lot to do with it. My grandfather never went back to religion afterwards.

Helen: It was a time that divided the whole society. But the effort he would have put in travelling around and taking that brunt ..

Patricia: Because although he had three sons at the war ... and his son-in-law ... and my grandmothers brother was also at the war ... that didn't seem to count in the public eye as much as his anti-conscription dogma and the fact that he was in favour of the German Schools staying open. And really he had a lot of German friends, Australian German friends.

Helen: And a lot of them in public office as well. He just seemed to become a target and bore the brunt.

Patricia: I think because he was fierce about it, and determined, and probably more outspoken than a lot of others.

Helen: And as we know history says that the referendum ... the "No Vote" won. And in the second one as well. I don't know the dates of that. I don't know if he was still campaigning

Patricia: No. He died before the vote was taken for the second referendum. He was still campaigning against it.

Helen: And why Semaphore?

Patricia: Because his brother-in-law lived at Semaphore and he was the one that took him in after he had the seizure. And also his younger sister Nell lived at Semaphore. So he had relatives down there I guess.

Helen: Strong links with the whole Port Adelaide area we think.

Patricia: The Port Adelaide area particularly was very Labor because of the working men down there ... the wharfies. My grandfather was a great believer in the wharfies union. He even voted communist one year much to my grandmother's disgust. (laughter) Never forgot it ... always brought it up regularly.

Helen: We found the history of the Port Adelaide Institute. There is a reference and photograph of E.H. Coombe. So the links are on a whole range of things .. the Institute, working Labor, and even to this day there are a lot of connections. A lot of people in Gawler end up retiring down Semaphore. There still seems to be strong links there.

Patricia: Quite interesting.

Helen: Nothing really changes in some respects. And since we met each other the Civic Centre has been renovated.

Patricia: Marvellous. And strangely enough my sister works for Badge.

Helen: Which was the organisation ... the builders ...

Patricia: That renovated it. So the family is still there.

Helen: And there are some framed photos that were presented after E.H. Coombe left Gawler and we have tracked those down. One is with the National Trust and the other is up at the Hospital. Because there was a connection there wasn't there?

Patricia: He was on the Board of Management there for quite a long time.

Helen: And of course now the Hutchinsons have moved. But they still have his photo.

Patricia: I remember the first time I went in to the Board room at the old Hutchinson and the first thing I saw was a photo of my great grandfather on the wall and I thought, my gosh he follows me everywhere. (laughter)

Helen: When was that?

Patricia: That would have been years and years ago. Long before the new hospital was even thought of.

Helen: We must try and track down and see if we can find some photos of that. It would be lovely to include.

Patricia: It was the usual one that you usually see. But I thought that was so funny because I walked in and straight in front of me ... and I thought; my gosh, there he is again. (laughter).

Helen: I think we might wind it up there. Thank you very much Patricia.

Patricia: That's alright. I hope people enjoy listening to our chat about someone we both think is rather important.

