

Betty Lovett

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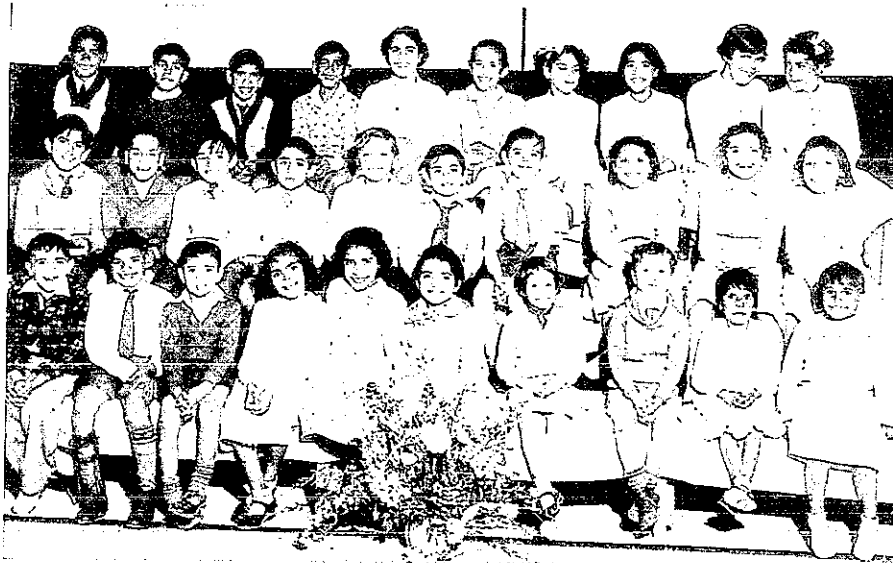
My mother must have been about six or seven at the time of the Cummeragunja Walk-Off, in 1939. About 30 to 35 families moved to the river flats at Mooroopna. So I spent most of my childhood on The Flat.

Everyone cared for each other and helped each other. And when the flood waters come up we all helped each other move onto higher ground at Daish's Paddock, just up from the town tip. Every time the river flooded we moved there. I remember going to sleep one night and the flood water even came in the bed. Sister Turner and Mrs Howe, from the Save the Children Fund, started a kindergarten for us at Daish's Paddock. When we had nothing to eat, Sister Turner used to give us lunch, and after school she would give us cocoa and sandwiches.

At times, us kids used to go down to the tip because we had nothing to eat. A fruit truck used to come down and we used to get the good fruit. We did that a lot when we were growing up. There was no work around for Dad.

Sometimes we went to Spud Lane, near Mooroopna cemetery. When we went out there all they gave us were potatoes. We had them boiled, fried, all sorts, you name it. We lived on potatoes for a couple of months. And that's how we came to call it Spud Lane.

We were the last family to move off The Flat up to Rumbalara. As soon as we moved to Rumbalara all the hassles began. We were treated like prisoners. People were allowed to visit during the day but after five o'clock they had to go, no matter if they are your uncle, auntie or whatever. They had to get out. My Mum's own brothers used to hide in the bush until after dark to come up and see us because they weren't allowed to visit.



Betty Lovett, (nee Jackson) second right, middle row, at Mooroopna Primary School, 1958. Val Heap Collection. Courtesy Museum of Victoria.



Joyce Atkinson paying her rent at Rumbalara.



Betty's mother, Valda Jackson, at The Flat.



Mrs Howe of the Save the Children Fund at Rumbalara, 1958.