



Kookynie Koos

Issue 2, 2024







Lydia Ann Manton (nee Cocker) story

I was born at Two Wells, South Australia, on August 19th, 1884. We lived at Glenelg, South Australia, until I was three years of age. We then moved to Footscray, Victoria. At the age of five, we moved to Newforth, then on to Spotswood. At the age of fifteen, 1899, our family moved to Western Australia. We lived in Boulder City. There I was apprenticed to a dressmaker, a Mrs Hughes, who managed a business called The Bonnet Box. Miss Hughes later moved to Brennan Bros. in Burt Street and took her girls with her.

I left Boulder for Menzies and was dressmaker there until 1905. I then left at age twenty-one to be married on June 5th, 1905, to Charles Edward Manton, metallurgist and assayer. My Husband patented the gold refining by sulphur etc, method. This method was used by the Royal Mint in Perth, several of the mines on the Golden Mile and the Lady Shenton at Menzies. My husband and I were given a tour of the Mint in Hay Street. Also, the smelting works in South Fremantle in 1905, this was because of this new invention.

On May 6th, 1906, my son Charles Edward was born. In March 1907, we left for Kathleen Valley by road in a sulky, three days travel from Leonora railway. On the way, heavy rains came, and the creeks were all flooded. When we crossed the creeks, the water came up into the bottom of the sulky. Arrived at Kathleen Valley worn out and very tired with nursing the baby.

My husband was treating sands on the Nil Desperandum and the Yellow Astor. He had up to eight men working for him, who were called sandmen. Our goods and luggage had been sent on ahead a month before by donkey team, which could not get through on account of the rains.

We stayed at the inn, run by a man called Tulloch. He also had the store etc. Eventually we got an old home. Iron roof and hessian walls which had been eaten by goats up to about three feet off the ground. It had a hessian door and hessian shutters for windows and a mud floor. For lighting we had candles and a hurricane lamp. We fixed this up and made it as comfortable as possible. Cobb and Co., Coach came once a week and the teams with the stores were 14 to 30 days apart.

This house was right on the edge of what was the town, very isolated. One day while I was resting with the baby, I thought I could hear someone in the house. I looked up and there was a strange man. He started to talk to me, but I couldn't understand him, so he went through everything. With only one exit, and him in the way, I could not get out. Thank God, he didn't touch me, but I got a dreadful fright. We then moved down by the works into an iron place, which had once been a shop, and was more comfortable.

On October 17th, our daughter Muriel was born unexpectedly. There were only three other women in Kathleen Valley at this time. One for men's pleasure, one at the hotel and another living at the miner's camp. No nurse or Doctor and I had no woman friends. We had engaged a nurse, but she got called to Linden to attend a birth. So, I only had my husband to do his best. This was the result if too much medicine (cascara, used for constipation) taken without measure. When they did bring the nurse, she was drunk and had to go to bed. In consequence, I nearly died and had a very sick baby.

We left there on Christmas Eve, on Cobb & Co, Coach. Had Christmas dinner with the teamster at an inn. On Christmas night some Italian miners had a fight alongside our bedroom, and I could see the hessian walls move.

Kathleen Valley Is between Mt Samuel and what is now called Wiluna. We eventually reached Leonora and had a couple of days to wait for the train, so I had a rest. Stayed in Menzies for a couple of days and saw a doctor who said, "not a healthy baby, you may not have her for long".

We went to Guilford for a couple of months, then to Katanning. By then both my daughter and I were much stronger, and we returned to Menzies, where my husband was running a Battery and Cyanide Plant, assaying etc. My third child Harold was born here on August 3rd, 1910. This job finished and we went to Kookynie in 1912, on the sands again. This time into a comfortable home with plenty of water and electric light and lovely garden. Kookynie was much better place to live. A chap ran a motor car for hire and had an electric plant for light. We got lights from 4pm to 12pm and had an electric well pump. It was the old mine mangers home, he had left the district when the mine closed. We were treating sand here. The house was a bit away from the shops. Fence in with wire netting, pepper trees and water tap everywhere, so we had a nice garden. It was very dusty here (white dust).

This job finished and we moved to Mossman, in 1912. In 1914 we moved to Katanning for a year and a half, then back to Mossman. On October 3rd, 1917, my fourth child Arthur was born.

In 1918 my husband started a motor engineering repair shop at 77 Monument Street, where we had bought a home in 1917, in February. He then bought a block of land at the corner of Willis Street and Stirling Highway, for the sum of two hundred pounds. He had a garage and service station built there. He carried on business there until he died in December 1928 at the age of 51 years.

BOULDER CITY 1899

Boulder City as I first knew it was mostly iron and canvas. A couple of brick hotels and a large building which was Queens Church – Methodist. No cars or trams in these days. The two bands played in the centre of the road at night. People walked everywhere. Water was bought in 50 or 100 gallon lots carted by dray and run into a house tank. No picture (movie) houses. The hospital was iron and canvas. Fever cases were plentiful.

MENZIES 1901

Menzies was a long street with about 10 hotels, several banks and churches and a nice Town Hall, with a small park at the side. Camel teams and donkey teams carted to the outback from here. Also, camel strings, camels, and Afghans. Everlasting flowers grew lovely, especially around Goongarrie Lakes. One large Kurrajong tree on the Mt Ida Road was place for several marriages.

Dingoes were plentiful and goats that had gone wild. We had two rainwater tanks here, and I had two kerosene tins of water each day extra from the battery on Friday Hill. We lived on Friday Flat. Not much water with three children, one saved every drop of liquid for a few plants, mostly grow in tins. The bush was lovely in springtime, especially all the patches of Sturt peas.

The band played in the street on Saturday night. Shops were open and the folk wandered all over the roads and paths. In 1916 this place was almost deserted.

KATHLEEN VALLEY

Kathleen Valley was a miserable place. One building was a home, where the man mined and baked bread, which was sometimes black and other times not cooked and impossible to eat. Another building was the store, hotel and boarding house. Really just a coach stop. Kathleen Valley was where the stranger had entered my home.

The mines were let to prospectors. The men worked for a month, had a crushing, and got a good cheque, which was then handed over the businessmen. They then remained drunk until the money was gone. Then they went back to work. The coach went up the road to Day Dawn at Wiluna once a week. Nothing there but scrub and copper-like rocks and dirt.

LYDIA ANN MANTON died on 14th January 1971.

She was 86 years old.

In the Garden (Margaret)

Tomatoes and Capsicums make a harmonious team, as does asparagus and tomatoes. Basil is a helpful insect-repellent friend. Tomatoes dislike fennel & potatoes. To help protect potatoes from potato blight, plant tomatoes nearby, but realise that the potatoes may slow the growth of the tomato plant.

Green beans and peas are beneficial partners for potatoes as are broad beans.

Bruising – place raw potatoes on bruises to remove discolouration. Potatoes are usually incompatible with pumpkins.

From Judith Collin's book—Companion Gardening.

Kookynie Kooee deadlines for publication

Please contact us at the Menzies Visitor Centre on
(08) 9024 2702

or email community@menzies.wa.gov.au

1st issue January—March

2nd issue April—June

3rd issue July—September

4th issue October—December

The deadline for each quarter will be the last Friday of the
quarter

General Information notices are welcome, as are notification
of upcoming local events.

If you have recipes, gardening tips or ideas for any other
pages, all ideas are welcome.

The Kookynie Kooee will be available online through the
Shire's website.

Hardcopies are distributed at the Admin Office reception, CRC
reception, Grand Hotel Kookynie, Menzies Hotel, Laurie's Café
and in every private mail box at the Post Office.

The Shire also sends an electronic copy to community
members who request to their personal email. If you would
like to receive a electronic copy please email

community@menzies.wa.gov.au