

BIOGRAPHY OF LORNA MERCIA PETERSEN **(NEE WATERS)**



Lorna now lives a restful life at Erowal Retirement Village. She is extremely well cared for by the kind Erowal staff. Lorna has been a wonderful community supporter within the Maleny community and in particular within St Georges Anglican Church community.

Lorna Petersen – her early life and arrival in Maleny

Lorna is one of Maleny's oldest surviving residents. She was born in Woombye in August 1919, the seventh (and last) child of John Samuel and Lillian May Waters. John Samuel was an English migrant, who arrived in Australia at the beginning of

the 20th century (he turned 21 during the passage). Lillian was a first generation Australian, the daughter of Henry Dyer, one of the leading pioneers of Landsborough.

Lorna's early childhood was spent on Buderim Mountain, where JS Waters established a general store. During the summer holiday season, he would move his family to Mooloolaba, setting up a smaller store 'under canvas' on the banks of the Mooloolah River to serve the needs of holiday makers, and all of his children had to help as part of their beach holiday.



Photo right - 7 little Australians taken 1920 (with married names) - (Standing behind group) Daphne Waters and Coral Skerman Front Row - Thellie Will, Gladys Broad, Mrs Lillian Waters with Lorna Petersen (approx. 18 months), John Samuel Waters, John and Beryl Waters. Three of the 7 children (Daphne, John and Beryl never married) and the remaining 4 sisters - Thellie, Gladys, Lorna and Coral produced only two children, Peter Petersen and Brian Skerman.

Sadly, the Buderim business became a victim of the great depression of 1929, and so it was that Lorna arrived in Maleny in 1930, as an 11 year old girl. The town was to become her home for the rest of her life. Her father managed the main store in Maleny, one of a number of similar businesses in the Sunshine Coast hinterland owned by his friend and fellow English migrant, John Tytherleigh. The structure of Tytherleigh's Maleny store still exists as part of the present IGA supermarket.

Lorna completed her education to Year 8 standard, but an untimely childhood illness denied her the opportunity to travel to Brisbane with others of her class to sit for the 'Scholarship' public examination. She left school and went to work in the offices of Sallaway Bros, a local business involved in timber-cutting, cream-carrying and general cartage. At that time, the 'Hornibrook' Highway, the original wooden trestle bridge linking Redcliffe and Sandgate, was under construction. The Maleny, Witta and Conondale districts were a major source of timber during the 1930's, and Sallaway Bros. supplied a large proportion of the timber for the bridge to M. R. Hornibrook & Co. One of Lorna's tasks was to measure the logs as they passed through Maleny, calculate the quantity and value of the timber, and prepare invoices for presentation to Mr. (later Sir) Manuel Hornibrook during his regular visits to Maleny.

Later, Lorna took up a position at Tytherleigh's store. Her father's retirement and the shortage of manpower in WW2 saw her take on a more demanding role within the store, in charge of the grocery section.

Lorna's marriage

Lorna met Walter George Petersen after his arrival in Maleny in 1940 to work as the accountant for the Maleny Dairy Association, and they married in April 1942. Walter was by that time in the army, and they spent the rest of the war years separated, as he was posted to North Queensland. A lucky break enabled Lorna to join Wally in Cairns for the closing weeks of the war, and she arrived back in Brisbane just a few days after the declaration of peace.

As was the custom of the time, Lorna gave up full time employment after the birth of their son Peter, in 1949. From time to time however, she returned to retailing during peak periods at a mixed business owned by family friends George and Elva Eustice.

**Right - Lorna and Walter Petersen
18-4-1942**



No. 26 Coral Street was the family home of Walter, Lorna and Peter Petersen. Wally was the Accountant, and later Manager of the Maleny

Cooperative Dairy Assn. The house was built in 1956 by the MCDA, and joined a number of other, older Coral Street residences as accommodation for factory management and employees. Other 'factory' houses in Coral Street included Nos. 18, 19, 20, 21 (since removed and replaced) and 28.

The Petersen family moved into the home in September 1956, - Wally, his wife Lorna, son Peter (aged 7) and widowed father-in-law, John Samuel Waters, (who passed away in 1959, aged 79). Peter left Maleny in 1967, after completion of his secondary education, and has since resided in Brisbane.

Lorna, Peter and Thellie Will 2006

26 Coral Street saw many happy celebrations of Christmas, births, birthdays and anniversaries. As a committed member of the Anglican Church Lorna spent many happy hours baking for street stalls, her house was a second home to many Anglican Priests, and she and Pete (as his family knew him) often hosted functions to promote the fellowship of their church family. Lorna and Pete's only son Peter married Stella Bristow in August 1978. No. 26 Coral Street welcomed the arrival of their daughters Claire in 1983 and Sarah in 1986. Many happy occasions were shared and Lorna and 'Father Pete' certainly went into record books as devoted grandparents.



Left - Lorna with cousins John & Tania Skerman, Matt and Judith Weier, Marj Skerman and Stella and Sarah Petersen



Walter Petersen

Walter Petersen was born in April 1913 at Mungana, and grew up in nearby Chillagoe, on the western side of the Atherton Tableland in North Queensland; both towns at that time being copper mining centres. His stories of childhood and early adult life involved fishing trips for Barramundi in the nearby Walsh River, explorations of the large limestone caves near Chillagoe, and the spectacle of the Barron River Falls in full flood before construction of the present dam and power station reduced their flow.

After completing his education, he worked as a clerk in the offices of the Qld. State Gov't's Copper Smelter at

Chillagoe. This enterprise was the only such facility in Queensland at that time, and was of considerable importance to the state's economy. The Tableland mines pre-dated the much richer deposits discovered at Mt Isa in the 1920's, and the initial ore mined at Mt Isa was transported to Chillagoe for smelting.

In 1937 Wally left Chillagoe to join the Australian Customs Service in Rabual, New Guinea. Although his stay in PNG was relatively brief, it was in many ways a formative period of his life, and was later the source of countless stories and reminiscences. Recurring bouts of malaria forced him to leave PNG after only eighteen months. He had secured a position with the Commonwealth Government in Melbourne to study meteorology, but on arriving in Brisbane en route, was too sick to face a Melbourne winter. Instead, he accepted the advice of friends, stayed in Brisbane and studied accountancy. After obtaining his qualification, he took up an appointment as Accountant with the MCDA, arriving there in 1940.

In October 1941, duty called and Wally enlisted in the Australian Army. He underwent basic training at Enoggera barracks in Brisbane. Wally and Lorna were married in April 1942, and shortly afterwards he was posted north, firstly to Townsville and later to Cairns. The army made use of his accounting skills, placing him within the Quartermasters section, and he finished the war as a Warrant Officer. He was demobilized in December 1945, and returned to Maleny to Lorna and his position at MCDA.



Life returned to normal in a small country town in the postwar era. The MCDA continued to grow, celebrating its 50th anniversary in 1955. Having previously manufactured only butter, from separated cream supplied by local farms, in 1959 the MCDA expanded dramatically to accept un-separated milk for the manufacture of casein (a powdered product used as a base for various manufacturing processes). This led to a significant increase in Wally's workload. Later, some of the milk found its way to Brisbane, to supply the needs of the growing city population.

First time grandparents Wally and Lorna with Claire 1983

Wally was a keen tennis player, and held various honorary positions at the Maleny Tennis Club, the most constant of which was as the curator of the courts. He spent countless hours rolling, bagging, sweeping, and line marking the club's four courts at the Maleny Showground. His other great sporting passion was cricket; he followed the exploits of the Australian Cricket Team in the greatest detail and was considered by most of Maleny's male population to be the local 'oracle' of cricket statistics.

In the early 1970's, Wally was appointed Manager of the MCDA, a position he held until it amalgamated with the equivalent association from Caboolture. Wally delayed his retirement for a year to finalize the details of the amalgamation, and thus became the last Manager of the MDCA. After amalgamation, the Maleny factory was initially downgraded to a milk receival depot, and later closed completely. The butter factory building, constructed in the 1930's, has now become the Maleny Enterprise Centre, and houses a variety of businesses.

In 1979, Wally retired after thirty-five years service. The 'factory' houses were no longer required by the newly merged entity. Wally and Lorna purchased the property at 26 Coral Street, and settled down to a quiet life. Wally passed away in August, 1992.



After Wally's death, Lorna continued to live alone at Coral Street until May 2007, when a broken hip suffered in a fall while shopping placed her in hospital, thus ending her 50 year occupancy of No. 26 Coral Street. She never returned to the house, instead taking up residence at Erowal Retirement Village in July 2007.

Lorna's life in Erowal has been marked by lots of faithful friends who has visited tirelessly and the care and compassion of Erowals' dedicated staff members has been wonderful and greatly appreciated by Lorna's family of Peter & Stella, (living in Brisbane), granddaughter Claire who resides in UK and granddaughter Sarah and husband

Tony (Grass) who also live in Brisbane. In September 2014 our family has been multiply blessed by the birth of our darling twinnies Max and Harper. Lorna has been thrilled to meet and enjoy the company of the twins over the last 18 months.



Granddaughter Sarah with Lorna 2014

Family gathering at Erowal October 2015 - L to R (sitting) Claire with Max, Lorna, Sarah with Harper and Peter and Stella are behind.