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## Community voices – transcript – OH 198/3

**Lindsay Wilson**

1993

Interviewer: Shirley Peisley

Aboriginal families of the South-East

*Extract of an Oral History where he discusses the Point McLeay shearers, his self-determination and methods of travel in the 1930s.*

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... those days, shearing meant a lot to us, because it was well above the basic wage.

And coming from Point McLeay, where the wages weren't very high, everyone there looked forward to shearing time, and at Point McLeay would be only the really old or the disabled, weren't out at shearing or rousabouting. There was quite a big team of shearers would all go - not all to the one place, but all in different parts of the state. Some would even go interstate. I liked it, and also you mixed with the white communities.

And during that time, while I was working in shearing with these white chaps, I would listen to them where they would saying, 'Oh yes, I'll do this and I'll buy that.' And I thought to myself, 'Well, if they can do it, why can't I do it?' And that started me off to think, 'Well, don't waste your money, young fella. You look after it.' Because a lot of those fellows who said they had this and that, they were shearing less than I was. So that got me thinking, 'If that man can do it, why can't I?' And I often thought after, why can't the other part of my Aborigine mates do likewise?

But I think, after all those years, I was the first out of that lot to buy to my own home.

### **That's a credit.**

And I wasn't always the gun shearer. A lot of those chappies, from Point McLeay, they would do a lot more than I would in day.

### **Well, there was obviously some very good modelling in your family, and as you talk about the gun shearers, I think I've heard you mention there were some excellent Aboriginal shearers.**

There were some excellent Aborigine shearers, and I remember three uncles of mine - my Mum's brothers from Blackford in the South East, they used to go on what they'd call the long lead. And in those days, they would go by push bike, from the last rail head, and then they would travel two and three hundred mile overland on these pushbikes. A team shearer, Uncle Horace would tell me, and Uncle Lindsay Watson - Uncle Lin, we'd call him, my namesake - sometimes there'd be thirty or forty men all travelling together on these push bikes in the outback. And no roads, mind you. And sometimes there wouldn't be a track, but they would know where to go, but their most favourite place where they would follow was on the camel pads.