

## **OH 31/16 - Interview with Mrs. Bates**

### **TAPE 1, SIDE A - Life on the fruit block**

**Could you tell me a little about say an average day, or what your different activities were on the farm?**

On the fruit block?

**Yes.**

Well, we had to work and pick the grapes and dry them, sultanas and currants, shiraz, gordays (?) – that's what you call muscatels – and grenache. And what we'd do is we had to pick some for this store for wine making and the others had to be dried, currants and sultanas, gordays. And we were pretty busy. By that time we might have a fortnight off and pruning started. Then we'd have to prune and twist the cane on to the wires. And then oranges – we had two hundred orange trees. We had to pick the oranges and, you know, get rid of all the fruit off that, dry the fruit and send it to the packing sheds in big sweat (?) boxes.

**You said you had just moved on to the block, had you, when the war broke out?**

1911.

**And it was all cleared was it?**

No, we had to clear the land, yes. My husband used to put a rope up high on the trees – big mallee trees and pine – and he cut it around partly, and we had to swing that until it fell. Then we cut all the branches off, heap it up and bum it off at night when it was dry enough, and cut the rest in to trellis posts to trellis the vines, you see.

**It was a hard physical life?**

Oh it was hard, my word. And we had an irrigation about every six weeks from the pumping station in Berri, and between those times the trees – the stuff was very young – we had to cart barrels of water down and water it by hand, the little young stuff, until the irrigation come, you see, regular. And we kept it going like that.