**289 July, 2014**

**THE STORY OF NANCY AGNEW AND JOHN MCGUIRE IN WATERLOO**

**(This story was relayed to me by Maxene Haddon, the Great Granddaughter of Thomas Jones and Nancy Agnew through Nancy’s son Thomas Jones jnr. and his wife Ellen Gardiner)**

**Dear Mavis and Jim and Tracey,**

**As you know, dear Margaret Babbini has been helping me with our research.  Last week we spoke on the phone about another cousin, Maxene Haddon.  Maxene gave Margaret the photo of the Buchanans in Beaufort.  This is the photo of the two ladies and the small child standing in front of the weatherboard house in Beaufort.**

**Maxene lives in South Melbourne, and I phoned her this morning.  It was indeed an honour to speak to her, as she is the Great Granddaughter of our Nancy Agnew and Nancy's first husband Thomas Jones.**

**Mavis, this means that Maxene is a second cousin of your father Roy.  Tracey, this means that Maxene is our second cousin twice removed.  She is a well-educated and lively lady, with an extensive and excellent memory for events in Waterloo stretching back well over 150 years.**

**Maxene informs me that, after Nancy Agnew's first husband Thomas Jones died, her second husband John McGuire (our direct ancestor) was not kind at all to Nancy Agnew's son Thomas Jones jnr.  In fact, John McGuire was not kind to the extent that Thomas jnr. ran away from the family home and went to live on farms, where he also worked.  Thomas jnr. married Ellen Gardiner, and it was Ellen who taught Thomas jnr. to read and write.**

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**As a matter of fact, Maxene said that Nancy Agnew was known as 'an old tartar'.**

**Nancy was a no-nonsense type of woman.  Maxene relates that when her own mother went to stay with Nancy Agnew, her mother was 13 years of age and had a doll.  Nancy told Maxene's mother to put the doll aside and she would teach her how to cook.   Whilst it is entirely reasonable to teach a 13 year old to cook, I have also heard Margaret Babbini relate a similar story about the doll.  The implication from both stories is that Nancy thought toys were a waste of time.**

**Maxene remembers her mother's brother Harry (also Nancy Agnew's grandson) telling her that our Nancy Agnew used to get the grandchildren to take her billy to one of the nine pubs in Beaufort to be filled with beer for her to drink.  Nancy was very poor.  Harry remembers that he and some of the other Jones cousins used to do woodcutting around Waterloo. After working all day they, had to walk a number of miles to their home.  Nancy's house was on their way. The boys would stop to see Nancy in the hope of being fed before walking another two miles to their own house.  Harry used to relate the story of turning up at Nancy's home to find only a few burned potatoes in the camp oven for her tea.  The boys were obviously not fed before they started their walk home.  Nancy's diet invariably consisted of damper (water and flour) and potatoes.**

**Maxene also discussed Mary McGuire's brother George McGuire.  Maxene concurred with Margaret Babbini's belief that George was a bit slow up top.  She said George used to make things out of wood, and made a potato masher from a branch of a tree. The potato masher was notable, due to the handle having holes in it.  This potato masher was passed on for a generation or two in the Jones family.  Maxene says that, after Nancy Agnew died, George did not look after himself.  He neglected himself and became malnourished.  George also used to have fits and seizures.**

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**These are remarkable tales, and I feel very honoured to be hearing these accounts of the family.  Basically, it was very rough up in the sticks of Waterloo.  Nancy Agnew and John McGuire were very, very poor, and life was very, very basic.  A bit like 'Housos' I imagine.**

**Maxene believes she knows who the people are in the photo of the Buchanans at Beaufort.  She asked me was this the photo of the woman in the dark frock.  I said yes, and have sent a copy of the photo to her by email.  She is now looking through a box she has with photos from the 1900s of the McGuires, Buchanans and Agnews.  She believes the photo is of Mary McGuire, but will confirm with me later in the week. I will obviously be in contact with you all as soon as I know.**

**My goodness! I wonder whether Robert Buchanan had to take the billy to the pub to get Nancy Agnew's supply of beer!  We may never know.**

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**Christine**