

## Haines Family of 52 Westlake

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Ada Maria Flanagan was born in 1907. Her parents, *Mick* (Michael) and Ada (nee Brennan) had a farm at Naas where Ada Maria was born. She married William Ronald (Bill) Haines sometime around 1925. Bill and Ada Haines' eldest son, Lionel - born in 1928 - was named after Bill's eldest brother who died in France during the First World War. Lionel sn was wounded during the conflicts and instead of staying in a safe area insisted on returning to the front where he was killed. He was awarded medals for bravery. Ada and Bill looked after a sister's son - also named Lionel. Around the age of ten he left the Haines home to return to his father.

Ada and Bill Haines' children are:

Lionel, Cedric (*Peg* - deceased), Edward (*Teddy* deceased), Allan (deceased), Kevin (*Moby* deceased), Hazel, Max, Mervyn, Lawrence (deceased), Dawn and Trevor. Hazel was the first girl in the family. The first child born at Westlake was Teddy. Peg continued his father's footsteps and became a champion boxer. The family tradition has continued with Dawn's two sons, Brian and Terry Cooper.



Haines Children of 52 Westlake 1940s

# Haines Family of 52 Westlake

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Only a few of Peg's Boxing Trophies have survived the years. Some of the stories of his nephews' careers appear are published. One such article appears in a July, 1979 issue of *The Canberra Times* which in part states: *Terry Cooper was very unlucky to lose on points to Joey Franck, of Sydney. A three time school boy champion Franck has had 34 bouts to Cooper's four. Cooper is a definite contender for a State Title next year on his performance against the State Champion James Willingham, of Newcastle...* Terry later went on to beat James Willingham. *The Canberra Times* reported this win and stated that *His [Terry] effort spurred boxing authorities to comment that he was a potential amateur title holder.* Brian Cooper also went on to become an outstanding boxer.

This is Hazel's story:

My father came from Tasmania and my mother's mother was German and her father, Irish. Dad and Mum married in Queanbeyan and lived at Gunning. Dad got a job planting pine trees at Mt Stromlo during the depression and they moved to Ainslie Camp and lived in a tent for a few years.<sup>1</sup> Mum told me it was hard living in a tent. She had to make her mattress out of hay and straw. She sewed two chaff bags together to make the cover. She had to change the hay and straw every three to four weeks. She made the boys mattresses the same way. Mum didn't have much to cook in - she used a camp oven. Then they got moved to Molonglo. Mum thought it was wonderful to be able to cook on a wood stove. Dad got a job at the Brickyards.<sup>2</sup> One pay day Dad lost all his pay - it fell from his pocket and went into a brick! His workmates took up a collection. Peg one day printed - *P Haines* - into the soft clay of an unfired brick. It was later used in the front wall of George Southwell's government cottage in Banner Street O'Connor. It was *found* one day when Vi and Lionel Haines moved in next door and saw it.

Around 1933 the family moved to 52 Westlake and then we all came one after another. Mum had nine boys and two girls. We had it tough with a big family. We had sad times and good times. I NEVER regretted living in Westlake.

Dad had a lovely big vegetable garden and apple and cherry trees. He also had a lot of bee hives and made his own honey. We had plenty of veggies and honey and eggs from our fowls. Mum would make a big stew or other main meals and three big apple and cherry pies and a big pot of custard.- Mum used to say, *If you have plenty of food and warmth in the house that's all you need.* We always had two or three different faces- not family members - at the tea table sharing our food. Mum would always make extra for Tea.<sup>3</sup> Dad would go shooting and trapping rabbits on weekends and when Dad came home on Sundays we always had orders from the neighbours for the rabbits. In summertime he went fishing. He caught quite a lot of fish - Murray Cod and Trout. One Cod Dad caught was too big for the bath - the head and tail hung over the bath ends. Dad gave the head to Ally Nish who owned the Sport's Store at

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<sup>1</sup> This was most likely to be the Mt Ainslie camp established in 1926 for tradesmen. It was officially closed around 1929 but used by married men with families during the Great Depression.

<sup>2</sup> Bill worked as a powder monkey and many of his working years were spent in the Quarry near Westlake.

<sup>3</sup> It was a good idea to make the extra because there was always extra mouths to feed at the table. Any child or adult in the home at tea time was sat down for a meal. Hazel and Dawn recalled in a conversation when dropping off their story to me that Dad Haines made an extra long table and trestle seats which sat on either side of the table.

# Haines Family of 52 Westlake

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Kingston. That fish head was hanging in his store for quite a number of years. Now we can't eat rabbit or fish - we ate too much of it when we were kids.

The friendships we had at Westlake you wouldn't have today and those friendships have continued and we still have them now. We all played together and went to the pictures with our friends. If one of us had no money we all would pool our money so we could all go. To earn money my brothers, Kevin, Max, Mervyn and Lawrence would go down to the golf links swimming and diving to find golf balls which they would sell to golfers. I would clean the house to earn the money so we could all go to the pictures.

We would all go down to the golf links and swim in the river.<sup>4</sup> My brothers went diving for golf balls in the Golf Links River [Molonglo River]. It was my job to sit on the river bank to watch for golf balls which landed near the river bank. I would quickly get up, put my foot on it and press it into the ground. When the golfer came over to ask if I had seen his/her ball I would reply *No! Never saw it!* As soon as they left I would pick up the ball, put it with the collection. Later we washed the balls and took them up to the Club House to sell. We usually made sufficient money for the pictures and had enough over to give to Mum to use for food or whatever she wanted.

We would all meet down at the river at the Links to go swimming. We all learnt to swim by someone throwing us in the river and they would call out - *sink or swim!* So we would be kicking our arms and legs madly and by the time we reached the bank we could dog paddle. We have many happy memories down at the golf links - swimming, playing on the suspension bridge and jumping and swinging on the big willow trees into the river.<sup>5</sup> A favourite sun baking spot was on the bridge. The golfers carrying large heavy bags always had problems stepping over spreadout bodies lying and sitting on the bridge. None of us ever moved! I got my first set off golf sticks from the river. The stick often followed the ball into the water. Kevin and I would dive in and get the stick.

We all played cricket on the road in front of our house and football - the boys and girls altogether. The boys had a billycart and they would race the other boys down Brayshaw's Hill. At night we all would meet at our corner under the light post and play hidings. We would play late at night and when Dad called us to go in but we took no notice of him - so he thought he would go out and frighten us. Ronnie O'Rourke and brother Allan put a chaff bag over themselves thinking that Dad wouldn't see them! Dad thought only Allan was in the bag so he went to scare him and toed him in the bum - but he got Ronnie instead. Ronnie let out a scream. We don't know who got the biggest fright - Ronnie or Dad!

Another time we were playing hidings. Duncan Campbell ran around the back of our house to hide in the grape vine. It was a moonlight night. We had a white goat. It was standing up eating the grapes. When Duncan saw it he thought it was a ghost and he got such a fright that

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<sup>4</sup> The swimming hole used by us all was off the pontoon bridge which crossed the Molonglo River and joined the two sides of the Golf Links.

<sup>5</sup> Dawn remembered that the willows provided material for play including hula skirts, bows and arrows and long plaits.

## Haines Family of 52 Westlake

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he ran into the house screaming out, *A Ghost!* He was so scared by the *ghost* that Dad had to walk him home every night after that.



When anyone died from Westlake we always made lovely wreaths for them. The flowers were collected from the Hotel Canberra gardens which provided many Westlake people with lovely fresh flowers.<sup>6</sup> We had some lovely Saturday Nights. Grandfather and Granny would come up from Bungendore for the weekend. Grandfather played the violin and Jack O'Brien [51 Westlake] would play the accordion and we all would dance. Mrs O'Brien would support by clapping and singing to the music. Mum and Grandfather would tap dance and they were lovely tap dancers.<sup>7</sup>

It broke our hearts to leave Westlake and our friends. We didn't want to leave. Peg, Allan, Kevin and Max all stayed at the old house for a week as they didn't want to leave. But it got the better of them as they had no electricity. They soon moved to the new home at Ainslie.

Our Friendship is as strong as it was when we were kids. We still meet and see each other.

Dad passed away [in his sixties]. Mum had a sad life. She lost five boys and she was ninety years old when she died on 27th March, 1998.

Following are some stories told by Dawn and Hazel:

Ada told Hazel that Bill Haines was sweet on her sister, Madi who in turn looked after her young man by doing his washing and ironing. Ada wanted to be noticed and put an end to the romance. One of her first *tricks* was to put chewing gum on the surface of the iron just at the

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<sup>6</sup> Numerous stories are told about the shopping for flowers, fruit and vegetables. It commenced as soon as the nurseries were established and was the subject of complaint by T Weston, First Superintendent of Parks and Gardens who complained that it was a regular Saturday outing for many Canberra families to stroll over to the nurseries and pick their week's requirements from the vegetable gardens and fruit trees.

<sup>7</sup> Hazel recalled that Mrs O'Brien had difficulties in walking. Hazel and her mother helped her walk to the bus stop and to the pictures which she enjoyed. Hazel also gave her a hand to clean the house. Mrs O'Brien paid Hazel pocket money.

## Haines Family of 52 Westlake

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time when Madi carried out her task of ironing Bill's clothes. On another occasion Ada cut off one leg of Bill's good trouser which he intended to wear to a ball with Madi.

Eventually Ada got her way and she and Bill married and began a long life together - a life which spanned the Great Depression and World War II - and most of it lived at Westlake and during their years there the creek in front of No 52 became known as *Haines' Creek*. It is remembered in one of Jim O'Reilly's poems quoted on page 129.



Lionel the eldest boy married a lass from Captains Flat. He and his wife, Vi, lived for a time at a Westridge in a cottage allocated to men working at the Brickyards. When he had organized a cottage - No 5 Westlake - he left that job. Vi and Lionel's son Steven was born during the time they lived at Westlake. They later moved to O'Connor.

During the time of the Great Depression it was not unusual for hoboos to knock on the door asking if any work was available in return for tea leaves and bread. No one was turned away. A handful of tea, bread and perhaps a pie if it was made was given to each who asked for food.

One night on our way home from the pictures we all jumped the fence into the Prime Ministers Lodge to help ourselves to ripe apples. Allan was still up the tree when the guard saw him. We all ran. Alan was still up the tree and try as the guard would Allan refused to come down. The kids who had scattered resorted to pelting the guard with their ill gotten gain whilst Allan got away.

Another remembered incident occurred when Hazel, Mervyn, Max and Kevin Haines along with a few other Westlake kids led by Marjie were on their way back from a trip over to the nursery at Acton where large bunches of flowers had been collected. It was a moonlight night and as the group came near the pontoon bridge joining the two sides of the golf course they heard voices on the other side. Marjie thought it was the caretaker of the nursery and organized the Haines boys to swim across the river with the flowers whilst the girls walked across the bridge. Upon arrival on the other side they found just another group of civilians walking back across the links. The boys needless to say need not have made the swim and had to return home in dripping wet clothes.

Water was part of the lives of the Haines children. When not in the river swimming the nearby creek, which always had water flowing, provided endless hours of fun. It was also one source of bait for the fishing expeditions of Bill Haines. He also collected Yabbies from near Corkhill's Weir to bait his hooks. When not looking his children raided the bucket in which they were

## Haines Family of 52 Westlake

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kept, headed down the backyard behind the shed and cooked them. Bill would count his yabbies - note some missing and speak in the following manner: *You bloody kids have been nicking my yabbies again!*

One incident which could have had an unhappy ending was to do with the flying fox erected on the hillside opposite the cottages at the top of the hill. Peg Haines on his way down fell before reaching the soft bed of grass tufts put there to ease the landing. Instead he landed on hard earth and broke his back and was for a long time encased in plaster. He was lucky - he walked again.

Food was always a favourite subject and of keen interest to the children. During the times when Hazel and the boys were on duty to stir the copper a quick trip to the back section of the garden was made - a few spuds dug and put straight into the ashes under the copper. It was not long before a delicious meal of cooked potatoes was ready and consumed skin and all. Our times as kids at Westlake seem like yesterday.

Kevin and Hazel in 1951 signed their names in the wet concrete of a culvert and an apron near the drain outside 48 Westlake. It is hard to think that Kevin is no longer a young man and he like many other Westlake *kids* is now dead. Their names along with *Duncy* Campbell, Kathy Poulter and others remain literally set in concrete and are a silent reminder of our once vibrant Westlake community.



Above – one of the Haines boys on the links. Background mid right is the old quarry – now Attunga Point.

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