

JOHN HOGAN O'DWYER and KATHLEEN ELISABETH MCKINLEY OF WESTRIDGE
(Yarralumla – part of former Westlake – in 1917 the area west of Stirling Ridge named Westridge
by Walter Burley Griffin when the Post Office opened there – so that the area would not be
confused with Yarralumla House.)

Information from grandson, Trevor Webber

My grandfather arrived in Canberra approximately 1921 or 1922. I think he had been working on the construction of the Hume Dam immediately prior to that. Having been a miner in Tasmania and a tunneller in WW1 he was possibly first employed on the construction of the Canberra Sewer mains. I remember him pointing out a tall vent on the way to the Cotter (also the one now disguised in one of the Commonwealth Bridge pylons). He lived in one of the Sewer Camps (No 3? – in the Gap Stirling Park, former Westlake) until married accommodation became available at Westridge which enabled my grandmother to join him with my mother in approximately 1922 or 1923. My aunt described the 'cottage' as being one of the old German Internment camp buildings relocated to near the current Forestry School site (in Banks St Yarralumla), but these ones must be the ones from the Molonglo Camp mentioned in your book (*The Builders of Canberra 1909-1929*) as being relocated to the Brickyards... According to my aunt when this accommodation was torn down, the family lived briefly at the Molonglo Camp (ie tenements) until moving to the Causeway (Cottage 94 according to the 1928 Census). They remained at the Causeway until the section of Kennedy Street in Kingston was completed and they became the first residents of No59 in the 1930s. The house was sold after my grandfather's death in 1959 (my grandmother died in 1952)...

Apart from the sewer construction my grandfather did a variety of labouring jobs in those early years such as road building, the construction of Parliament House, the Manuka Baths and the Forestry School. During the Depression he planted trees for the forestry school one week in four and lived in camps away from his family those weeks. He also spent some time as a nightwatchman/cleaner at the National Library in Kings Avenue [pulled down and replaced with current National Library of Australia]. By the early 1930s he became one of the two boiler attendants for Barton House in Brisbane Avenue where he remained until his death in 1959 (the other boiler attendant for most of that period was Jimmy Blake of Narrabundah). ..

My grandparents had four children – my mother Mary Patricia (1922-1987), Marie (1925-1981), Walter (1927?-1928) and Kathryn (born 1923(...))



The photograph left shows the Eastlake Tenements. These cottages were ex-internment camp buildings moved to Eastlake. They are of the same type as moved to Westridge in the area of Banks Street. The cottages were unlined and because the timber was not dry when erected when dried out left gaps in the walls that allowed the wind to 'whistle through'.