

My Parents and Family – Susanne Joy Hansen-Smith (nee Rendle)

Ivy Joyce Leach was born in Eketatuhna in 1908.

Leslie Hector Rendle was born in Woodville in 1905.

Emily and Jock Leach moved to a farm in Woodville from Eketatuhna when my mother was five years old and Joyce spent her life there until marrying Leslie.

They moved to Palmerston North and first lived at 249 Grey Street before buying a house and moving to 612 Church Street, Palmerston North. I was born in Palmerston North along with my sister Judith - 18 months older than me. My brother Maurice - 9 years older than me, was born in Woodville prior to the family moving to Palmerston North.

My Mother, Ivy Joyce – known as Joyce.

After leaving school my mother became a milliner in Woodville prior to her marriage. This was a skill that she carried all her life, not only did she design hats for herself – which she always wore when going out - but for many other fashionable people in Palmerston North.

She also took up floral art and became very proficient at that as well - always the creative spirit. Most of the time we always had lovely flower arrangements in our home and people who visited admired them greatly (and enviously). Joyce was very involved in the Floral Art scene in PN belonging to a club along with other art inspired events.

We had a number of standard roses which were tendered very carefully by both my parents and flowered extremely well each year. As well as flowers, there was a largish vegetable patch which our father worked on.

With another creative skill learnt, dress-making became a way of life for Joyce. Not only did she design and make clothing for many other people, she was always fashionably dressed herself. She was able to draft patterns to suit a particular request. I was also taught how to sew, cut out patterns and made many garments. This carried on after my marriage and I sewed many garments for my four sons and myself in their early years.

My mother was involved in a number of organisations. Her strong support was through the Young Women's Christian Association – YWCA. This offered a number of different groups which one could belong to, eg Young Wives Groups etc.

The Girl Guides organisation appointed Joyce as an examiner, mainly in sewing, stitching etc. The Girl Guides would come to the house with their handiwork to see if it was of a standard to be presented with a 'badge'. On some occasions holes were cut in father's socks, for an eager Guide to show off her darning skills!

Due to a change in her health, Joyce moved to Wellington in 1982, firstly living with my sister and her family and then in 1987 moved to Wesley Haven Village, in Naenae, Wellington.

Joyce passed away at aged 87 on 28 September 1995. Following a time of experiencing not such good health and her heart giving up.

My father, Leslie Hector Rendle - known as Les

Leslie – worked in the Post Office in Palmerston North and rose to the rank of Investigating Officer. To go along with this position came a very smart bicycle, provided by the Post Office. It was distinguished from other bikes, by having red forks, which was the prerequisite for all the Post Office cycles. (I guess today one would be allocated a car for such a position!)

As a young person growing up, one of the jobs Leslie had to undertake was take the milk from the farm down to the milk factory by horse and cart, empty the milk into vats and then wash out the cans in hot water. On one particular day after Leslie had delivered the milk he accidentally fell into the vat of hot water while rinsing out the can - it was due to the fact that the plank was inadequate and was not nailed down correctly and a Court case followed. As the water was very hot, it scalded the lower part of his legs, taking off several layers of skin. He went through life with delicate skin from the knees down.

Leslie was bestowed with the honoured of Justice of the Peace – JP. This entailed a lot of people coming to the house for documents to be witnessed and signed, as well he had to “sit on the bench”. This meant Court hearings, usually on Saturday mornings after some misdemeanours the previous evening (but other times as well). This was to either, grant bail or the other alternative, jail. There were also visits at home from the Police for Leslie to sign Search Warrants for them.

Having been a keen hockey player while living in Woodville, this carried on in Palmerston North and after a short time he took up refereeing. I understand he was a fair, and sought after person for any of the good games around.

Les was involved in the Masonic Lodge for many, many years. I think he was in the hierarchy but nothing was ever disclosed about this, nor about the organisation itself.

He helped start the Ohakea Services Lodge at the RNZAF Ohakea Air Base, so airforce personnel could still choose to be part of Lodge participation during the war years.

Also a keen vegetable gardener, we were encouraged to partake in it all. The only thing I didn't like was ‘couli rabbi’ (a vegetable, not heard of much now) which unfortunately for me, seem to grow well in PN! There was also an extremely prolific “Granny Smith” apple tree which resulted in many very delicious apple pies being made and enjoyed.

Leslie passed away at aged 68 on 15 June 1973. He suffered for some years with *Bronchiectasis* which was mostly due, I believe, to having been a smoker. Joyce carried on very well in PN until she had a heart attack and the decision was made to go to Wellington.

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As was the tradition then, there was a “chicken coup” at the back of the section. This consisted of a number of bantams, 1 rooster and a number females bantams laying eggs to supply the household. The rooster was quite a noisy chap, particularly in the mornings!

I remember when our family had our first new car. My parents alerted us to the fact that it was coming that day, so Judith and I waited in anticipation for the arrival. After pulling up in the driveway in the brand new A30 – we took one look at it – and rushed off to tell the neighbours, much to our parent’s dismay who were looking to show it off to us.

Extended Family

We spent a lot of family time with our relatives in Woodville. The trip through the Manawatu Gorge was either by train/railcar or by car. I always remembered when we left Woodville in the railcar Grandma would stand outside their farm house and wave a tea towel as we went past - farewelling us.

Time in Woodville was spent with the families of Joyce’s sisters, Lena (nee Leach) and Arthur Walker, as well as Gwen (nee Leach) and Ron Harris. In the holiday time May (nee Leach) and Les Vickers and family would arrive down from Auckland. Joyce’s brothers, Charlie and Rex were also living in Woodville for a period of time but moved to Rotorua and Eltham respectively. With the contact we had, we did get to know our cousins quite well.

Jock Leach was a Judge for the Jersey Breeders Association and participated in the Agricultural & Pastoral Shows (A&P Shows) in the area. As the farm, had of course, Jersey cows the grandchildren (Judith and I, along with our cousins) spent time, prior to the event practicing leading the calves around. This was in preparation to showing them off “in the ring” at the local show on behalf of our grandparents. Usually this was a successful venture. For each cousin - after all the practice - was to see who could lead the best calf and successfully gain the winners ribbon!

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Recollections - October 2015

Susanne Joy (nee Rendle) Hansen-Smith (17 May 1942)