

Lindeman Notes

Karl was always known as Charlie when he was in Coober Pedy.

Karl had been a POW in France in WWII. He learned English in school in the camp.

He came to Australia in 1952. He worked hard for 2 years to pay off his fare and to save the £450 needed to send for his wife Gertrude and daughter Tina.

They were living in Geelong, Victoria, when Karl first visited Coober Pedy with a Hungarian neighbour who had been an opal miner. Karl had factory jobs and worked on the Victorian Railways as a train guard. While in Geelong, he applied for a job in Darwin as a storeman with the Government and got the job.

In 1958, the Lindemans packed up all their possessions into an Austin A40 and towing a trailer with family (there were 2 boys as well by that time) they set off. At Ararat they were cut off by another car and forced into the ditch but someone pulled them out and they were off again.

They had allowed time to see the country before they had to get to Darwin so they stopped off at Coober Pedy. They had some friends here and Karl wanted to do some digging. He found opal in the Jewellers Shop so decided to stay. Harry Hammerstal supplied the family with a large black tent. They lived in there until they got a dugout.

Karl mined 7 years, until 1966, when he got a job with the E&WS. The E&WS just started then. His job involved building a solar still, issuing ration cards, pumping water, the reverse osmosis plant. He became the district foreman of the Water Works plant.

They first lived in a shed near the Hospital then at the Water Plant. They also lived out at 9 mile in caravan Karl and Gertrude had 2 more daughters while living in Coober Pedy.

Karl hadn't played the piano accordion for 30 years but was persuaded to take it up again. He used to play at parties and at the Old Italian Club.

Gertrude wasn't trained as a nurse but took on the responsibility of the Medical Kit. She had the medical box and the radio which were in a caravan near their house with the red door on what is now Hospital Hill. She dealt with emergencies with Karl's help.

Coober Pedy was like a family; everybody looked after everybody
Once they had to go to Tarcoola with a sick child to hospital. The car stalled on the way back. A message got passed on the Coober Pedy that they needed help and it came.

Gertrude passed away in 1997.