

Interview

By Jaxon Godek

Great Grandmother - Beverley Hansen,

Age 91

Born 25th April 1935

What was your mother/father like when you were growing up?

My mothers name was Alice and my dads name was Harold. My parents were very kind and nice to me. They lived a happy life together, but it was busy.

We lived on large dairy farm in Whitianga so we had many animals to look after. My mum spent her time cooking, cleaning and looking after us kids.

My dad was always on the farm working. He would make me milk the cows every afternoon when I got home from school. The cows were milked by machine for the first part and then we had to finish the milking off by hand. I didn't mind, I knew it was just something I had to do to help the farm run well.

What do you know about your mother/father's life before she had you?

I only know about when my parents got engaged.

They lived in the time of the depression and my father had to line up outside Western Spring early in the morning with his pick and shovel in the hopes that he would be one of the first men in line. Then it would be a matter of whether you were early enough and how many workers Western Springs needed for the day as to whether my father was able to work and earn money.

When my parents got engaged, they put it in the local paper to celebrate, but the very next day my mother lost her job, as back in those days, it was believed that because there was such little work, the husband would look after and take care of the money for his wife and family. From there, my parents moved to Whitanga and begun the life of farmers.

What is one of the greatest lessons your mother/father has taught you?

Throughout my childhood, there were always two things my parents taught me. It was to always tell the truth and be kind to everyone no matter who it is.

This was a great life lesson and I taught my own children (your Nana Lee) up with the same morals.



Tell me about a favourite memory you have of your mother/father.

My most favourite memory growing up with my parents was living on the farm. We always seemed so happy. Life was very basic and we didn't have much money. But the farm would always be busy and enjoyable.

We would walk to the nearby beach, called Buffalo Beach, on the weekends and play in the sand and water. I remember watching the dirt road in front of our home on a Saturday afternoon and if the green van drove past in the early afternoon, we knew there would be a local movie on in the park. A projector was set up and we would sit in the field watching the latest flick. The farm and my time spent there was my most favourite childhood memory.



What do you admire most about your mother/father?



There was never a passing moment where my parents didn't think of their children.

They worked very hard and they looked after their children with everything they had. Even when I was young (12 years old), they put their children first, selling the farm and moving to Henderson, Auckland so that I would attend high school.

What were you like as a child?

I was very argumentative, I always wanted my voice to be heard, but I was also beautiful and kind of course. I never got into trouble at school and was never given the strap.

Do you know how you got your name?

My mother was from Canada, so when I was born, she and my dad decided to name me after the Canadian beaver. My name 'Beverley' comes from the small Canadian mammal with big front teeth that builds dams.



What sorts of things filled your days as a child?

If I wasn't at school, I would be riding horses and going to the beach on the weekends with her brother.

During the week, I was never allowed anywhere after school. I would come straight home, start milking the cows with my dad and helping around the farm.



Are there any games or toys you particularly remember playing with, what were they and why did you like them?



I had a card game named Pit. It was a game where there was no turn taking and everyone plays at once. Players trade commodities (agricultural products such as oil, wheat, corn or gold) among one another by each blindly exchanging one to four cards of the same commodity. The trading process involves calling out the number of cards one wishes to trade until another player holds out an equal number of commodity cards. This was one of my favourite games and I would play it all the time with my brother.

Did you earn an allowance growing up? What did you spend your money on?

I did not have an allowance. We didn't have very much money at all. I remember begging given 10 shillings at Christmas time, where I would buy my mother, father, sister and brother presents. 10 shillings was $\frac{1}{2}$ a pound and was about \$20.00 these days. But that was all the money I was given. We were not paid for our work on the farm and didn't get to have money of our own very often at all.



What is the happiest moment of your childhood?

I would joke and say “when I gave the whole community chicken pox”, but I will instead say when my baby sister was born.

What was the saddest moment of your childhood?

My most saddest movement growing up was when we had to leave our home and farm in Whitianga. When I turned 12, the government made it law to attend school until you were 15 years old. We did not have schools around my area that allowed that to happen, so we moved to Auckland so I could go to school. I was very sad when this happened as we had to uproot our lifestyle on the farm and move to another home somewhere unknown to me. It was a scary and daunting experience.

What vacations did you take growing up?



We had very little money, so vacations like the ones you have Jax, was a rare occasion. We would not go on holidays as we had to tend to the farm. My first (and only) vacation was with my family to Rotorua, New Zealand.



We stayed in a hotel and did the tourist attractions such as a mud pools and lakes. I was 15 years old at this time and did not experience any other vacations before or after this one.

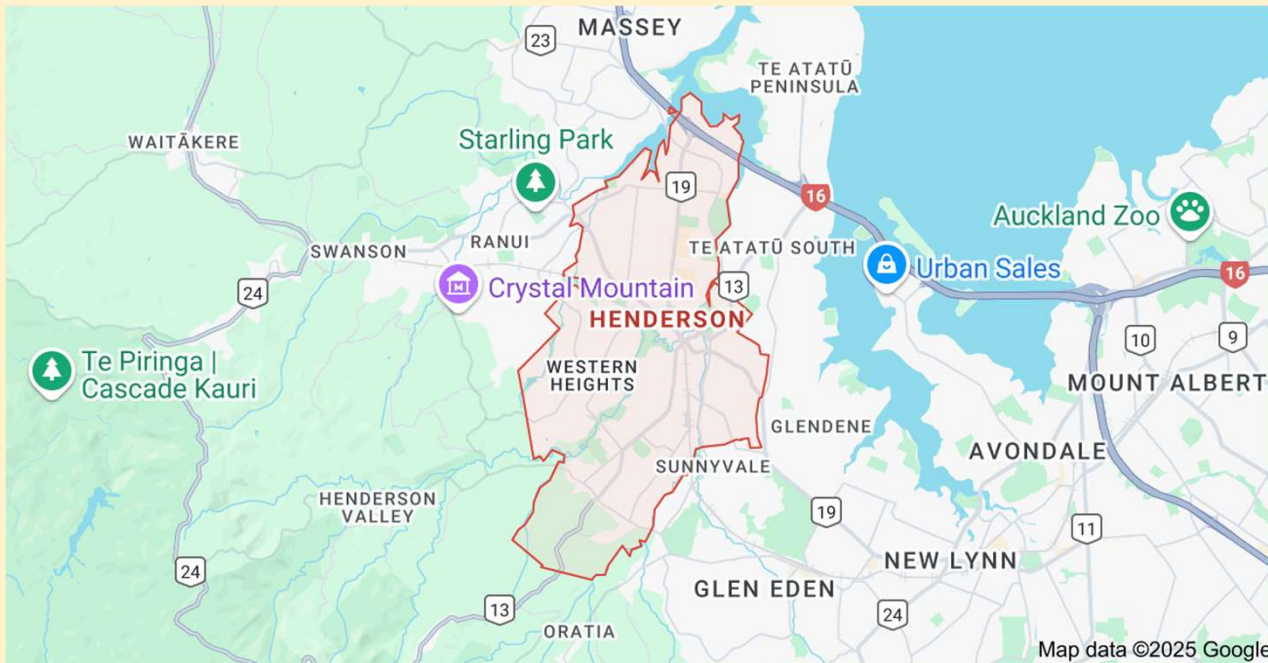
What was the best place you visited?

The best (and only) place I visited as a child Rotorua, because it was the only place we ever went to. I do remember it being a wonderful holiday though and we all had a great time exploring the sights.

Describe a time when something went completely wrong while traveling.

Nothing went wrong during the holiday. We stayed in a lovely hotel and saw lots of things. We enjoyed our time as a family.

What was the best home you lived in growing up? What did you love about it?



I had only lived in two houses growing up, the farmhouse in Whitianga and our home in Henderson, Auckland.

I loved the farmhouse because it was home and we had so many great memories there.

What was your neighborhood like?

We didn't really have a neighbourhood as such. The nearest neighborhood was half a mile away and down dusty roads. We didn't play in the street like you do now, we really just stayed at our farm and I played with my siblings.

Sometimes I saw neighbourhood children at Buffalo Beach in the weekends and we would also see them when we were shopping or going to the outdoor cinema.



Did your family move around or stay put? What was that experience like?



Apart from our move to Henderson when I was 12 years old, we pretty much stayed put.

Our lives revolved around the products that came from our farm, so my parents spent much of their time and energy on that.

Pick a house you lived in and describe it in as much vivid detail as possible. What stories could that house tell?

The farmhouse we lived in at Whitianga was old. It was one level and made from wood. We had a front porch and lots of farm land around us. We had sheep, cows, horses, chickens, pigs and lots of gardens where we grew our food.

Our home had a cole range, the range being the only stove. We had to chop their own wood to keep it burning. We had lamps they had to light at night with kerosene. My mum had an iron that worked on petrol. It was very basic, and now that I think about it, there were things we had to do to keep warm and clean that we wouldn't imagine of doing these days.

If you could go back to any year, which would it be?

1952

I would go back to 1952, when I was 18 years old. That was when I met your great grandfather, Kenneth Hansen. We met at a local dance in Henderson and we started dating. He was very handsome and we fell in love very quickly. When I was 18 I was so happy and life was full of adventure and future plans.

Evaluation

What worked well was writing down the questions.

During this project, I had a couple problems, one being asking the questions. We didnt know who to ask and it was hard because all my family lives in Auckland. Another thing that proved hard was that some questions we had to delete because my Great Grandma either didnt know or didnt want to tell me.

One thing I would do differently would be being more prepared. I had plenty of time to ask the questions but I was too lazy and kept on forgetting to sit down and ask the questions. I need to make better choices with my time.

Overall I think I went pretty good. I worked hard on the slideshow and I think it looks good and has all the correct questions and answers.

From the interview with my great grandmother, I learnt that most of the things back then aren't the same as today. An example of this is... the money, the money was way different, the prices were low, a few dollars meant heaps. If you were a kid back then, you could get two Big Ben pies with 2 dollars. The average wage was a measly \$1.05 an hour, compared with \$33.56 today. I can relate to this because, going into dairy and buying one pie for \$3.50, is basically a rip off.

Another example which shows continuity is the wage. Getting paid \$8 an hour back then is really everybody's dream. Getting paid more than \$25 an hour today is really not that much, when you have to pay for all the bills and internet. But back then was also very hard to get money for the family, even your own self.

This is supported by this quote from my interview: "Life was very basic and we didn't have much money. But the farm would always be busy and enjoyable."