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You asked me to write my story for you back in August - we had a lot of good times - I tend to focus on them being a positive person.

I went to St Davids Childrens Home for girls in 1940. I was 3 years old. They changed my name from Shirley to Sheila. My 4 older sisters went into the home 12 months earlier & Edna had her name changed to Mary.

I don't remember my 2 older sisters being there, so was never able to form a strong relationship with them. Sister Blanche was a mean and cruel woman. She should never have been with children. She did the washing & ironing & doing that for 45 people perhaps made her so vicious.

Sister Gertrude was in charge & she also put the fear of god in us but she had a kind side. She had been a nursing sister in a large hospital so she looked out for our welfare. You couldn't talk or be out of a right - you were caned, if you kept it up after the caning, in summer you were put outside in the dark. Woodshed. Playshed. Gardener's room & boiler room was where you ended up. I was petrified and have trouble to day being on my own at an evening. But I've overcome a lot of my hang ups. We spent more time in Chapel or down at the cathedral than anywhere. We worked our butts off scrubbing, polishing

cleaning the gully traps. Any work to be done we did it. Never a day went by that we didn't want to get out, but when you're in a home for the long haul you have to make your own fun & we formed friendships that are still strong 50 years later. Sister took us on many picnics, out to the weir or the rock but our favourite was Rocky Hill. We had lots of fun. Any misdeemeanours through the week & you were left home. The food was awful so we stole a lot from the pantry, in through the small window & boxes of corn flakes or anything we could get went out the window.

We had 2 gardeners up there & there was never any wrong doings where they were concerned.

We had no sexual abuse from any one. We were most fortunate in that respect.

After Sister Blanche was sent back to Melbourne for belting a girl stripped in the box room, it all changed up there. We were no longer so afraid! Sister Gertrude left us a few years later & Sister Catherine came too us. A tiny woman but strict not cruel. We used to sing a lot up there & each year we entered the Goulburn Easterford. We loved it, & learnt to harmonize and sing descants. We sang over radio 2GN and at the Sacred Concert each year. We would sing descants in the

cathedral every Sunday and loved it.

Christmas in the home was great. We watched the chooks get their heads cut off. Pulled out these feathers, stunned the cock & waited until Christmas morning to go into the big girls sitting room & the Xmas tree was always huge & beautiful. Santa came in the form of the local grocer & handed out the presents, mostly second hand, but we didn't know or didn't care. We always had a lovely day. I stayed in the home until I was 16. I left in 1953 - I changed my name back to Shirley, Colna changed hers by deed poll to Mary. She went overseas at age 23 and married a very wealthy

American. Will often say to me. Not bad for a home kid. A lot of our girls married well, we keep in touch, my friend tells me I led a sheltered life. Perhaps I did. It wasn't a normal upbringing, but I turned out O.K. I'm not ashamed I was a home kid.

But don't label me as a Home or call me a victim because I'm not. I married & have 4 lovely kids & 3 beautiful granddaughters & lots of friends. I just happened to be put in a home through no fault of my own. I never go through Goulburn that we don't sit outside 130 Cowper St & I think of the 13 years & the good times & I try & not dwell on the bad times.

I gave a talk last year to our View Club about growing up in a Children's Home. They thoroughly enjoyed it & asked me would I do the talk again in this way, but I didn't want to do that.

I hope this is of some use too you. It's hard to put your childhood on a few pages - but I've done my best.