

Varina Beverley Gilbert,



8-6-10

About late 1945-early 1946 my mother placed me in the Salvation Army Girls Home, "Maylands", 27 Pirie St., New Town, Hobart, Tasmania. She was pregnant + alone + my name was Beverley Dalzell, D.O.B. 4-11-38. I have approached the Tasmanian Government but as I was not a State Ward they say there are no records for me. I was at "Maylands" until maybe late 1948. What happened to me there, I would classify as abuse. Sexual (by older girls) + plural acts of emotional and physical abuse. I do not remember ever seeing any outsiders coming to do inspections. I have been told that the State gave permission for these places to operate - who did they think did all the work there? I remember one open day when the public was encouraged to come to a fundraising fete + we had to help with the setting up in the front circular drive-way. We were never allowed out the front as a rule except to work. My mother came to the

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fest, so we were able to spend some time together, until she had to leave to go to her job at the Hobart Repatriation Hospital. My brother had been born at "Elim" another Salvation Army Home in Hobart for unmarried mothers. It was run as a commercial laundry + Mum was compelled to continue working, even after her waters broke. My brother was also in a babies' home.

About early 1953 I appeared in the children's court in Melbourne + was charged + convicted with being a neglected child. I was firstly at "Turana" at Royal Park which terrified me + then I was taken to "The Harbour" in Bohuna St, West Brunswick. I was 14 years old + this was not a children's home. It was a Salvation Army Industrial Laundry which did all the work for all the other money-making businesses + institutions that the Salvation Army owned - plus other favoured clients. I did not get the chance to make up the missed education caused by my mother's transient work history. You would generally expect that if you were removed from an unsatisfactory parent it would be to better circumstances. I did not get paid + after about a year Major Stevens (Stephens) bought me a ticket to Benalla + she took me to Spencer St. Station + put me on the train. Mrs. Williams met the

train at Benalla + I was taken to her "convalescent home." No one ever convalesced there. After about 3 months working with + cleaning up demented, soiled, WWI veterans (I was 15 + had never seen a naked man before) with no pay or days off, I returned to Melbourne. Major Stevens said she didn't have time to talk + she didn't have time to meet all the people who wanted one of their girls. This would also have been non-compliance with the labour laws of the time + abuse of the child labour laws too.

Of course there are no records covering this period either, as I was still not a Ward of the State, but I believe the children's court records are stored at Werribee. The Salvation Army also told me recently they never owned that place at West Brunswick - it was run by two ladies who took all the records to Adelaide + wouldn't give them back.

I think it's much too late for me <sup>for</sup> apologies given under pressure, uncomprehending counselling + conditional compensation. The Salvation Army owes me + State Governments should have been responsible for the institutions they were approving. They are the ones who should have had the counselling + vocational training. What I need is recognition that I really did pass this way + live this childhood - just because records have been disposed of, people

have died + buildings knocked down doesn't erase my history. I want everyone to know what happened to me + who did it. I was here. I speak only for myself - others welcome the apologies, counselling + compensation. We are also divided on the idea of being a Special Needs Group under the Aged Care Act. This will be one of the topics discussed at the 10th anniversary of C lan in Sydney early in July. I am a member.

Having a good memory, I can go into detail about a lot of the things that happened to me as a child - what would you like to know?

Thanking you,