

MARY JOSEPHINE WATERSTREET (née CARROLL) 1900-1997

Information supplied by family members and extracts from the Albury 'Border Mail.'

Mary Josephine (Josie) Carroll was born in 1900 at the premises of her father's butcher shop in Townsend Street Albury. She made exceptional personal contributions in two world wars – as a teenager when the boys were going to be slaughtered at Gallipoli, then, twenty six years later, she was telling the boys going off to the jungles of Malaya and New Guinea that she would pray for them. As one soldier left her hotel for the last time, he gave her his rosary beads and asked her to use them on his behalf – she did.

The lasting memory many have of Mary Josephine is her motherly manner and lovely singing voice. She was a much sought after singer on any occasion, notably Anzac Day, when people went to hear her songs which were made popular by the camaraderie of the war – and the will to win it.

Mary Josephine's upbringing was unspectacular. It seemed she was destined to be another quiet country girl who would in time marry and have a family and that's about it. On leaving the Albury Convent High School she worked at Mate's Store Albury as a dressmaker and then Reis's Model Store, working behind the counter.

When war come she and some shop girl friends established a song and dance troupe known as the *Boomerangs*, the purpose was to entertaining the troops in training and raise funds for the war effort. The *Boomerangs* were very successful and so popular that postcards were made of them dressed in costume.

After the war Mary J continued with her singing and commerce. She raised funds for the fledging Albury Base Hospital. Her work was so valuable that the hospital board made her a life member in 1924. She was a life member of the Mercy Hospital where she personally raised enough money for the first set of theatre lights in the old Mercy Hospital. Josie was also a life member of the Albury City Band Ladies' Auxiliary due to her financial support.

In 1922 she met Charles Waterstreet a member of the well established hotel family. They were married at the Sacred Heart Church Darlinghurst, Sydney in 1924. They lived in Vacluse

Also community minded, Charles assisted in finance at the Albury coursing track. Charles was responsible for starting what was widely known as the Waterstreet's sweep, raising thousands of pounds for Saint John's Orphanage at Wirlinga. After Charles' death, Josie continued the sweep helping to keep the Orphanage operating for many years.

In 1926 Charles employed Cochrane builders to build the family home in Smollett street Albury. Charles died suddenly in 1938 and Mary Josephine moved back to Sydney with her six young



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children – Nora, William, Josie, Helen, Mary and Clare. There she became a member of the St Mary's Cathedral choir and sang at the Sydney Town Hall. But with a shortage of finances to educate her children, she returned to Albury in 1944 and resumed control of the Railway Commercial Hotel in Smollett street.

The war rationing covered beer too. The hotel would serve for about 90 minutes from 4.30 pm to closing time. With no refrigeration the beer would run from oak casks stored in the cellar through copper lined lead coils covered in ice.

The Waterstreets rode out the post war shortages and in 1952 the family vacated the Commercial and lived privately. In 1958 Mary Josephine returned to the hotel life at the Pastoral Hotel, Townsend Street. She established a clientele that included many tradesmen and the East Albury Cricket Club.

One of the best days of the year at the Pastoral was Anzac Day. One fancies that Mary Josephine, survivor of two wars, had a better idea than most the thoughts that traverse the minds of old diggers. She could lure them into the Pastoral merely on the strength of a promise she would sing those old songs, the favorite of all being "Danny Boy." With her family Mary Josephine remained at the Pastoral until it closed in 1984.

With many wonderful memories, close friends and family, Josie lived the remainder of her life privately with her daughter Josie, until her death in July 1997.