

EBBY HASTWELL

(Kindly supplied to Wendy Baker by Robyn Meredith Upton (nee Hastwell))

Excerpt from Ebenezer's grand-daughter Claire Hastwell's transcript of her recollections. Can be seen in State Library of South Australia.

Described as very short, about 150cm. ie under 5 foot.

"I doubt if Grandpa was ever a baker himself as I doubt if he would have been tall enough to mix the dough in the deep trough. He probably employed a baker, but he saw that his boys learnt the trade."

"I remember my Hastwell grandparents well, although they were old when I was born. He was 73 and she was 69. Their children called them Mater and Pater."

When she knew him, "he was bald with white hair over his ears and back of his head. Always well groomed and dressed in a style long past. He wore a bowler hat, and had stiff fronted shirt and collar and small bow tie. In summer he wore a pith helmet."

(Description – by Claire Hastwell - of Grandma (Eliza) Hastwell follows.)

"Can't remember Grandma in anything but black. She wore a lace blouse – always white and a high necked boned "collar" to her chin. Her skirts were long reaching her shoes which were buttoned over her ankles something like boots. I don't know where they could have bought these clothes, as no one else wore them. Grandma had "spectacles" – nothing as common as glasses – for reading. These she kept in a "spectacle" case which she opened at the top and which she attached to her belt by a medallion clip and two little chains."

"Neither Grandma nor Grandpa had much warmth – she was very severe and ram rod straight and dominated her family –especially Ebby. She, of course, never called him this – I can't remember her addressing him by name at all."

"They placed great store on good manners and we were always on our very best behavior when Grandma and Grandpa Hastwell came to visit us. They did the rounds of their sons – and once a month they came to "tea" with us at Statenborough Street, which was a time of tension and pleasure for me. Tension because I feared that I would be the one asked to say 'Grace', or that I might spill something or do something to disgrace the family. The pleasure was the story that followed tea. She would sit on a cane chair on the right of the fireplace with its wood fire burning while I sat in my little cane chair by her side. The story was a continuous saga from the Billabong series by Mary Grant Bruce. I knew exactly where Grandma had stopped in the story and would give a resume of the previous month's episode, for her to pick up from where she had stopped."

"Grandma was a recognized authority on Homoeopathic medicines and in her younger days people in her area sought her advice. She passed her knowledge onto her sons."

After Eliza died in 1930, Ebenezer came to live with the family at Tantanoola for 3 or 4 months. "This was a trying time for us as we were crowded in a 4 roomed house and he was so irritating. I expect he was just trying to be friendly, but didn't know how to treat and talk to children. He used to pat Harry, aged 7 on the head and pull my plaits. And we had to smile and not get cross....I have a mental picture of him in his Victorian clothes, with a book under his arm and a cushion walking to the Tantanoola Oval where he would sit under the pines and read."

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