

## Molly Miller Notes

### Subjects:

Admitted in 1910, 7 yrs old  
Teaching Staff  
About Miss Aston  
Dining Room, food not much good  
Daily routine  
Workers helping little kids  
Bathroom  
Classroom  
Dormitories  
Brush shop  
Braille Library (SKR)

### People:

Miss Bryan  
Miss Aston  
Mr Dobson  
Miss Breamer  
Miss Renshaw  
Miss Headly  
Mr Palmer  
Polly Bowen  
Jean Suiter  
Miss Stamp  
Elsie, Roy, Jim  
& Ada Sharp  
Don Forbes  
May Cunningham  
Dulcie Nichols  
Mr Hogarth  
Alice Mack  
Nellie Jones  
Emma Light  
Leila Holmes  
Alec Wells  
Nell Somers  
Fred Sutcliffe  
Bismire  
George Findlay  
Arthur Lily  
Edie Wendt  
Maggie Rowan  
Maggie Woodhead  
Nell Harris  
Nell Hurst  
Mrs Spencer  
Rose Ravenport  
Austin Anderson  
George Benson

## MOLLY MILLER

Reuben Ryan and Jim Smith interviewing Molly at the Villa Maria Boronial hostel

JS: righto Reub

R: now Molly, which year did you commence school?

M: I was 7, 1910

Who were the teaching staff

Miss Bryan was the one who taught now, & Miss Aston, Mr Dodbson the headmaster, goodness he used to dose to sleep sometimes

J: can you tell us about Miss Aston

M: she was totally blind and she matriculated, a clever person, and a v. good teacher.

We were very lucky to have her. She taught grades 4,5 6, 7 and 8 when I was there

She was a splendid knitter. My mother used to say when she'd come to collect us on a Friday, she could see us knitting to see if we were dropping any stitches, and there was Miss Aston but she could feel all our stitches to see if there were any dropped and she'd pick them up.

R: did I hear you say one time that sighted people used to take their knitting to Miss Aston to check it

M: I don't know about that She did teach at one time in sighted schools to talk to Kindergarten perhaps. No other teachers

J: who was house mistress/matron Miss Reamer (Breamer?) she was there for many years, assistant Miss Renshaw, in the workroom, Miss Headly was next to matron in the cottage where the boys were, she looked after then, she was in charge when matron was off. I've got to think. Mr Palmer was there and Polly Bowen was there teaching music, she'd leave you on your own often. Mr Palmer was senior to her. He took the theory, Braille music and more advanced students. Miss Bryant was very good, were small children, all very fond of her.

R: some one had deformed hands

M: Jean Suiter(?) the hand trouble was due to an accident in Scotland, they had no feeling in her hands, couldn't read Braille, Miss Bryan tried to teach her

J: Miss Stamp the first blind teacher?"

M: *Molly lists some of the students,* Elsie Sharp, there were 3 blind in her family. Elsie was the elder one, Roy was at school with Jim, and Ada came later. Don Forbes started school when Molly was at school, May Cunningham, Dulcie Nichols

How was the food

Oh, you know, not too good

We had tables with three on each side, the long table and forms to sit on. Very cold cheerless place, the old stone room, had a flag floor. The fireplace was never used.

The girls sitting room had a fire going in every room. Mr Hogarth was super and he died after I left.

What time would you go to bed of a night

Little ones at 7.30 we went at 8pm a bit older than them,

What time did you rise in the morning

6.30pm as you got older you got up earlier

made your own bed and when you were older you instructed the little ones to make their own. When I was little, Alice Mack used to make my bed she wasn't at school with me about 12 years older than me and she's here now. Mis Mack lived in as some of the other workers lived in when they were doing the brush making. They used to

help with the little children, doing their hair. There were 4 retired people living in the building, Nelly Jones, Emma Light, Leila Holmes had an accident, she was one of the old ladies and one other but

We had hot water upstairs, not down but in the baths were, not too big, not like the boys there were two along the side and one on the other side. We had long desks about 4 one after the other, with 4 or 5 of us sitting at the long desks. They had 2 at a desk later and they eventually got 1 to a desk. Miss Bryan had lacing frames and round shapes to know circles, the braillettes and she started the kiddies off from nothing. She had to train the fingers to feel and recognize things. Thin wood circles.

Dormitories had about 17 sleeping in there. I forget how many there was of us. We had 4 beds across the top of the dormitory, we had some of the young boys in our dormitory. Alec Wells was with us, she married Nell Summers, Nell was about 14 when I met her, I went for music lessons after I left when I was 19 she was there then, I used to meet them and talk to them. Fred Sutcliffe took me for music. Fred was in a higher grade when I was at school, he learned singing, had a beautiful voice. He took over from Polly Bowen. He made a bit of money singing on the wireless.

I learned the piano, I did learn at St Josephs in South Yarra as well

I worked in the factory for a little while, a couple of years, in the brush shop, brooms, The head man was Bismire,

Sighted George Finley was in the brush shop like the overseer under Bismire, Arthur Lilly was there when I came back after a while. Some of the girls, Edie Wendt, Maggie Rowan, Maggie Woodhead, Nell Harris, Nell Hurst, we were great mates Nell and I. Mrs Spencer was there, do you remember her, she had a daughter about 14, a son and daughter, but I think she married over in Tasmania. Scrubbing brushes, all wire drawn work, brooms as well, and banister brushes, very heavy work bassing ??? shoe brushes, some brooms. It's a bit hard to remember. I did a lot of Braille reading, mum and I loved that. I used to read to her and she to me.

Rose Ravenport was a wonderful reader. Austin Anderson was a good comedian.

J: I used to remember Austin doing his piece at the concerts "and I murdered him one evening"

George Benson was at the library when it was in the institute before it went to Commercial Road. When you went into the porch from the garden there was a door facing you and that lead to the library and in the library there was many books and a sort of a stand with shelves on it used to stand in the middle of the floor, we went in to get books from one side and the girls who were working from the factories came through the other door to the other side of the shelves. Between the lawn and the pantry

George Benson might have been in the school as a kiddie, much older than me and was working in the library at St Kilda and Commercial Road.

J & R: the institute was helping the library out by providing space in the institute. They were independent of the institute. Jim remembers reading about that in the history of the RVIB. I don't remember when they went to Commercial Road.

Molly remembers the opening day at the library when they presented Miss Aston with the key.

She remembered Jim Smith as being involved with the horses.