

Anthony & Elizabeth Schagen

Anthony (Tony) Schagen was born on 11 February 1922 in Zaandan, Holland. He lived with his family and after completing his education pursued a career as a carpenter, a trade that was undertaken by his uncle and other family members.

Anthony continued with his trade and in 1955 was offered a foreman's position with the company he was working with. He was apprehensive at the time, as this would involve extra work and study, but he persisted with his studies and successfully completed the course.

Anthony showed interest in travelling and working in South Africa with the company on a two-year contract, but was disappointingly turned down. Anthony considered his options and turned down a promotion in Holland and considered travelling to New Zealand.

Anthony and Elizabeth had a friend already at the "Wacol Camp" who was sending them letters. Anthony and Elizabeth decided to migrate to Australia with their two children Peter and Elizabeth Maria (Elma). On 18 October 1958 Anthony and his family left Holland destined for Australia on board the ship *Southern Cross*.

During the journey to Sydney the *Southern Cross* docked at Port Phillip Bay, Melbourne. This gave Anthony and Elizabeth their first experience in Australia. Anthony recalls the unusual method of serving chips wrapped in paper. Desiring a glass of beer, Anthony and Elizabeth entered a pub only to be told to leave as women were not permitted.

Anthony and his family eventually arrived in Sydney, where the rest of their journey to Wacol Queensland was undertaken by train, arriving on 21 November 1958.

Anthony and his family settled into Wacol quickly. Anthony gained employment immediately as a carpenter working in Auchenflower. This involved the three kilometre walk from Wacol to Darra Rail Station each way. Elizabeth went to work in the camp kitchen. Both Anthony and Elizabeth found their new arrival to Australia full of different experiences and challenges, including the language and the hot weather.

Anthony describes the accommodation as adequate with four families sharing one accommodation block. They were supplied with four beds, four chairs and linen. The close-knit community at the camp enabled Anthony and his family to make friends quickly, it also helped that the majority of the people were Dutch. Anthony contributed to the lifestyle of the camp by teaching the children woodworking, painting and making toys. The camp life also created some humorous situations like the time Anthony came home from work to find Elizabeth sitting in front of an open fridge to keep cool.

Camp life also provided the children with opportunities for mischief. Elizabeth recalls that milk was served twice a day, once in the morning and evening in "billy" cans. In the afternoons the children would collect the milk. As children do, they could not resist the temptation to swing the "billy" cans, thus spilling the precious milk, quite a sight. Or the times during the school holidays when the children would collect the linen and toilet rolls and end up wrapping the toilet paper around the trees.

Anthony and his family and the Dutch community brought with them some of the old traditions from Holland to the camp such as making doughnuts during Christmas.

Anthony and his family spent a total of ten months at Wacol before moving on to their own home in Ipswich.

Anthony continued his work in carpentry / building and worked on several well known landmarks in Brisbane, including the ABC tower in Toowong and Mount Gravatt Teachers College. Anthony experienced problems with getting his carpentry qualifications recognised in Australia. After presenting his "papers" to the officials at Trades Hall, Anthony learnt that he qualified as an engineer.

Anthony and Elizabeth look back on their time at Wacol with fond memories and still maintain contact with friends from Wacol through their association with the Dutch Club.