

The Women of Fibre

PART 2

■ Lynne Johnson



Following on from part 1, I would like to introduce some of the Bradshaw women: Louisa, Ellen, and Florrie Burnett.

Louisa Bradshaw

Aunty Lou had no birth certificate. We're pretty sure of that. The two photographs we have of her, one as a child, one as a woman, are quite faded and indistinct. Yet she shines through Mum's stories as clear and as interesting a character as I could hope to meet. There are many of these Women of Fibre I wish I'd met.

If a choice had to be made, Louisa Bradshaw, my grandmother's Aunty Lou, is the one I'd pick first.

Perhaps I did when I was younger. She died in 1952 when she was 90 after living at Gibb St, Kelvin Grove, Brisbane for many years. Mum said her house was just down the hill from the tramline that headed for Newmarket in one direction and to the city and beyond in the other.

Mum was a young woman at the time and they were staying with Aunty Lou. They were the Wally Bocks...my grandparents Wally senior and Madge, plus my mother Esme and young Wally. It was 1935 and the family was on leave from Port Moresby.

On this particular day Aunty Lou had been to town. She'd hopped off the tram at Stop 9 and was walking down the hill. Mum met her at the gate, offered to carry something and took the brown paper parcel that felt soft and interesting. It was a bargain, end of the roll from Mac'n Easts Aunty Lou had said. She unwrapped it, 2½ yards or so of magenta polished cotton. It was bright, shiny and gorgeous. For cushions perhaps? No. Aunty Lou needed a respectable pair of bloomers.



Staying with Aunty Lou...she is second on the left at the back. Beside her on the left is Madge and that's Esme, first on the left sitting on the step at Gibb St. The rest are Aunty Lou Curtis's adult children and some of their children. Esme's brother Wally is in there too.

She wasn't as tall as she used to be and reaching up to get into the trams showed just far too much leg she said with a twinkle.

In the early 1980's while I was busy sewing pieces of fabric together to make quilts, my mother was busy tracking down her great grandmother Ellen Daniel, mother of Aunty Lou.

She knew that Ellen had lived for many

years in Gympie, Queensland and she knew that at this time she was married to Frederick Tarver Smith. Mum wrote a letter to the Gympie Times asking about any descendants of Ellen and Fred. She struck gold! She met many more of Ellen's great grandchildren when she visited soon after and learned that they called themselves the "Gympie Smiths". One of them, Jim Burke, was particularly helpful. He'd been doing his own digging and his leads took him to Stanthorpe where he tracked down the site of Ellen and Fred's home at Kettle Swamp Creek. Esme was able to tell him why Ellen went to Queensland in the first place and how Ellen and Fred came to meet.

This is the only other photo we have of Aunty Lou that we know of (top of page). Louisa Bradshaw as she was known then, is third from the right. She's about 11 years old wearing a pinny over a dark dress, possibly with pantaloons and white socks and boots. There are two younger step siblings to her left. The man in the middle of the row of adults is Frederick Tarver Smith, Louisa's stepfather. To his left is Ellen Daniel her mother. The rest are older sisters Mary and Kezzie Annie and Mary's new husband Charles Parker. If you look carefully you may see a Moses basket on the pile of rock in front of Fred and Ellen. We think the baby is another stepsister Violet Ellen. The Gympie Smiths always called this home The Bark Hut.

But before we hear more about the family let's go back to Mac'nEasts in George Street. McDonnell and Easts, the proud store's proper name, was down the end of George St towards Roma St Station. The building is there still, well, the outside shell of it is there. It was always a bit of a landmark, Mac'n Easts—one of several drapery and department stores down that river end



Mac'n Easts in George St in 2004... long gone are its proud days as Drapers, Outfitters and Tailors for Queenslanders

of the City in Aunty Lou's day. Edwards and Lamb, Barry and Roberts, Allan and Starks, McDonell and Easts were all reliable places to buy material and patterns and buttons and zips and cotton and knitting wool and all the other necessary bits and bobs.

But it is the other end of George St, down nearly to the old Botanic Gardens where Aunty Lou's real story begins. No trams then. No fancy shops with double barrelled names selling fancy goods for her yet. There was however a fancy and very new Government House nearby, recently built for Governor Bowen and his family. The Bowens had moved in earlier that year (1862) and there'd been a ball to celebrate Queen Victoria's birthday. But Lady Bowen didn't dance that evening, she was in "delicate health" and soon after gave birth to a daughter in their new home. There was no maternity hospital in Brisbane at the time (so the Encyclopaedia tells us).

Such a hospital would have been useful to our family that year. Just back

along George St somewhere between Margaret and Mary Streets on the 5th or 6th of September Louisa Bradshaw was born under a dray beside the roadway. Hardly surprising there's been no birth certificate found!



This photograph of Ellen is in the collection of Gympie Smiths

Ellen Daniel

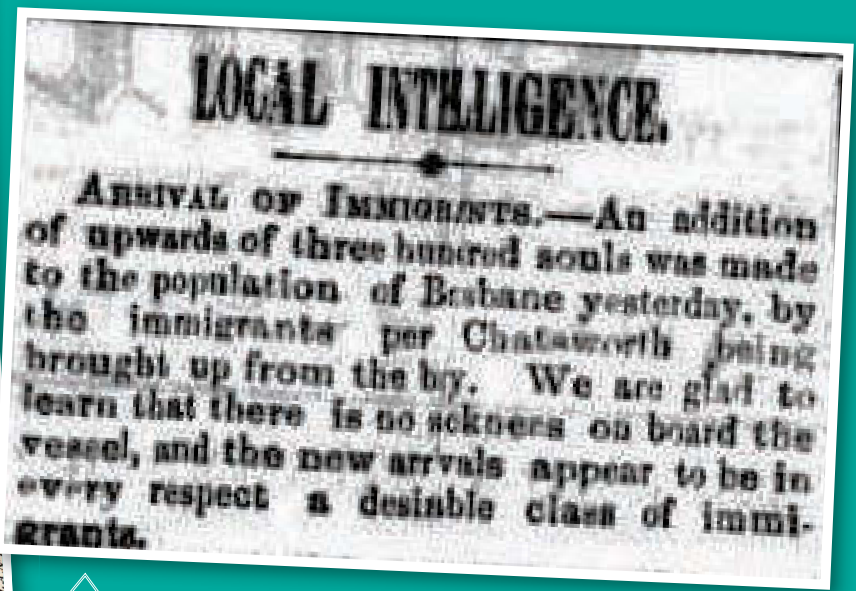
I guess you won't be surprised to learn that Ellen Daniel was quite a woman.

Ellen Daniel was her birth name and that's what Mum always called her. I first heard about her living in the "bark hut" Creek with Fred Smith, a tin miner at that time. But that wasn't until ten years after sailing to Moreton Bay from Liverpool in 1862 on the Chatsworth. Ellen and her first husband Joseph Zadok Bradshaw were on board with their children Mary 8, Harry 6, Keziah Ann 4, Joseph 3, and Edwin 1. The family had set out from Burslem in Staffordshire where Ellen was a warehouse woman in one of the hundreds of potteries there. Burslem was well known for its potteries. It was also well known for cockfighting in Victorian times and the story goes that Ellen loved going to the cockfights!

But that was when she was younger and now she and Joseph and the children were just one family among



Map of Moreton Bay



From page 2 of the Brisbane Courier, Thursday the 4th September 1862. The new arrivals, including Ellen and her children. "appear to be in every respect a desirable class of immigrants".

thousands migrating to Queensland in the 1860's to take up new lives in the new colony. Ellen was pregnant with her sixth child.

Many children had died from measles on the voyage and the ship was quarantined in Moreton Bay for several weeks. During this time Joseph who the family stories say was a lay preacher, went across to one of the other ships, the Erin-go-Bragh, quarantined nearby with typhoid fever. Joseph became ill and died on the 3rd of September, the same day as their infant son Edwin died of dysentery. Father and son were buried together on St Helena Island. The Chatsworth sailed on into Brisbane where Ellen, her remaining children and their fellow passengers disembarked.

Brisbane was apparently unable to cope with all the newly arrived migrants and there was no accommodation available for many, including the Bradshaw family a matter of days before Louisa was born.

My grandmother Madge used to say that Ellen met Fred Smith when she took her children to the Sunday School that he conducted in Milton, one of the early suburbs of Brisbane. He was recently widowed and had one son.

At some stage Ellen was running a grocery shop in James St, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane. Perhaps the family was living upstairs or at the back of the shop. There is much we don't know from this time but we do know from the newspapers that there were major floods and fires throughout

Brisbane in the early 1860's. It seems the family survived all that and Ellen and Fred moved to Sydney where they had several more children.

They married in 1872 and undertook the 600 mile trek by wagon from Sydney to Stanthorpe, where miners were flocking. Violet Ellen was born soon after they arrived. Lily Sybil another of their children died as an infant and was buried not far from the Bark Hut. Stanthorpe can be a bitterly cold place in winter, in the mornings the frosts are often deep and it's not unusual for snow to fall. These days it's the heart of a vigorous fruit and wine growing area with strong cultural traditions from Italy and other parts of Europe.

This photo (right) suggests that later in life things might have been a bit easier for Ellen, that she was a woman of elegant bearing and perhaps of comfortable means. In one of Mum's notebooks there's a scribbled note in one corner. I'm assuming she was chatting to one of the "Gympie Smiths" at the time. The note says about Ellen, "Short and plump. Always wore a cap. Used to remake them".

I looked again at her photographs and I re-read Esme's notes and I realised that Ellen had twelve children in all, ten who survived beyond infancy. Six with Joseph Zadok Bradshaw, six with Federick Tarver Smith. She lived till she was 88. She died two years after my mother was born. Today we'd call her resourceful or resilient—tough even.



Florrie Burnett

Absent from the Bark Hut picture and absent from many early family stories are Harry and Joseph Bradshaw who would have been 19 and 15 when the photograph was taken. Harry and Joe were the surviving sons of Ellen and Joseph Zadok Bradshaw and came ashore in Brisbane with their mother and sisters in 1862.

Part of the story goes that Harry and Joe didn't get on all that well with their stepfather Fred and went out mining on their own when quite young. But they were around in Burpengary north of Brisbane in the early 1880's when the family lived there. Esme was told that her grandfather, Joseph, was engaged to Florrie Burnett, a young woman who

lived on a neighbouring property with her family. Florrie was about the same age as Joe's sister Louisa. They were at school together.

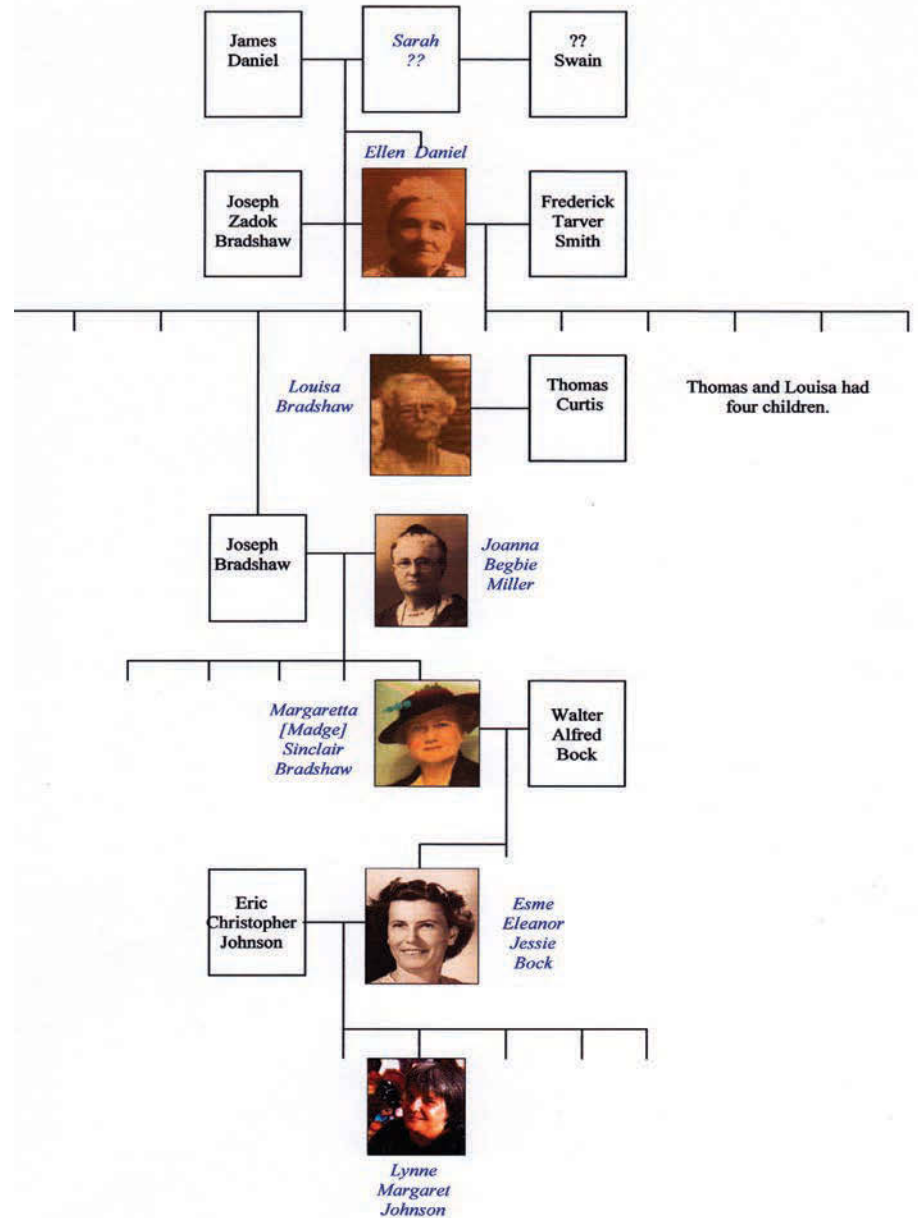
On the 6th of July 1881 Florrie [officially Florence Amelia Burnett] aged twenty was seriously wounded when the gun that her father John and brother Ernest were working on exploded. Florrie had been outside bending down cooking at a covered fireplace. The men were wanting to shoot a pig and the inquest records that they didn't know that Florrie was there and didn't know that the gun was loaded.

John and Jane Burnett's only daughter died two days later. We can only imagine the impact of her death on the family. Likewise we can only imagine what the impact might have been for young Joe Bradshaw. But we meet him next in the mining town of Irvinebank in Far North Queensland. There he was to meet his future wife Joanna Begbie Miller whose original marriage plans had also been interrupted by the actions of another.

The family tree was shown in Part 1, as were the family faces and the sketch of the dray outside Government House. This mini-tree shows the women down through the generations, including me, at the very bottom.

To find out more about the *Women of Fibre* story visit www.womenoffibre.com or email lynnejohnson@grapevine.com.au

Multiple Generations in the Bradshaw Line





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