

Lost Houses papers 28 September 2024 at Yeronga Community Centre

Part 1 by Denis Peel

The idea for this presentation was hatched by the Corley Collection house photos in the John Oxley Library at the State Library of Queensland that were really difficult to find. In the Corley Project we were trying to find the addresses of the houses in the photos and sometimes the houses simply weren't there any longer. In 2023 I had two separate conversations with Lyn Burnett and John Horder about the houses that their families had lived in for many years and wanted their stories to get a better hearing and Kate Dyson has been attempting to solve some disappearing house mysteries. So here we are with *Lost Houses*. Today we're going to hear stories about houses and the families who made them their homes and those houses were lost but as we'll soon hear some have since been found again.

We're gathered on Yerongpan clan land and we acknowledge that they built the first dwellings "goompi" here which ranged from small family sized structures to much larger covered areas. Sometimes these dwellings were dismantled and stored for re-erection at the next visit or left in place as they were. We can only wonder at the stories the families who lived here might have told.

I thought I'd go to literature here so I looked for poems and songs about houses but I didn't find as many as I'd thought I would. The top song about houses was House of the Rising Sun which didn't seem appropriate for this event ... Maybe with a bit of a tweak "There was a house in Fairfield Road" mmm.

When I put "house" into a search it immediately gave me lots of titles with not "house" but "home". I found that interesting because the word "home" carries a lot more weight of emotion. "Home" carries a sense of belonging to a location, a family, and a community. Doing house history inevitably leads to a broader understanding of local history and our connection to the wider world.

Note: After the presentation Mark Baker pointed out that a more appropriate song was Tom Waits' *House Where Nobody Lives* which concludes,
What makes a house grand, oh, it aint the roof or the doors
If there's love in a house, it's a palace for sure
But without love it aint nothing but a house
A house where nobody lives.

So, how can one lose a house? I'm pretty good at losing car keys and glasses, but a whole house? There are many ways:

6 Inchcape Street, Fairfield



6 Inchcape Street, Fairfield, c 1943 courtesy Sharon Hepburn (nee Kinman)

6 Inchcape Street was built around the 1930s and during World War 2 the Kinman family there had two teenage sons who made their pocket money by running errands for the American servicemen stationed around the corner in Ashby House, 135 Brougham Street. 6 Inchcape Street was lost to a fire in the 1950s. A new chamferboard house was built after that and stood there until it was demolished around 2017 and the third house in 90 years was constructed here.

73 Juliette Street, Annerley



House at approximately 73 Juliette Street c1970 Frank and Eunice Corley Collection, SLQ

The man looking at Frank Corley snapping his house in Juliette Street around 1970 is also looking straight ahead at the building of the initial segment of the south-east freeway. This is a case of land resumption; the spot today is occupied by some large concrete pillars. Houses have disappeared when land has been resumed also for road widening and road re-routing.

20 Lisle Street, Tarragindi



20 Lisle Street, Tarragindi c1972 Frank and Eunice Corley Collection, SLQ

Alex and Edith Romow were owner-builders of the 1950s. Alex was Ukrainian and had fought in the Red Army at Leningrad and been captured by the Germans. He escaped from prison camp twice and spent the last few months of the war hiding in the barn of a Danish partisan farmer.¹ In 1953 Alex and his wife Edith, a German, migrated with their baby daughter. Together they laid every brick, board and tile in this house learning as they went from their German speaking neighbour John Ehm who was a bricklayer.² After Alex passed away in 2019 and Edith moved out, the house was sold and demolished soon after.

¹ *Alexei Bandura* by Alex Romow is his autobiography. A copy is held in John Oxley Library(JOL)

² *Tracing Tarragindi* 1970 report compiled by Denis Peel pp 9-11. Copies held by ASHG and JOL

2 Kingsley Parade and 66 Hyde Road, Yeronga



2 Kingsley Parade and part of 66 Hyde Road, Yeronga, c1970 Frank and Eunice Corley Collection, SLQ

Most recently we've experienced a spate of disappearing houses as written about by local writer Ashley Hay in the May edition of *The Monthly* this year. *You walk the dog early one morning and a house down the road has disappeared.*



2 Kingsley Parade and 66 Hyde Road, Yeronga, August 2024

The block where it stood has been cleared, smoothed and planted with perfect and brightly green grass. A row of bollards has been installed to divide this newly park-like space from the width of the road's footpath, with the punctuation of one bright yellow access gate. You walk a little more. Another house has gone; and then another.³

Both these houses were part of the “buyback” scheme after the 2021-2022 floods in South-East Queensland, here administered by the Brisbane City Council.

³ *The Monthly* May 2024, pp 12 - 14



2 Kingsley Parade, August 2024 photo Ross MacDonald

Among the people to have lived in these two houses were: at 2 Kingsley Parade, the Brisbane River pilot and Harbourmaster Richard (Dick) Hilderbrand, who as Harbour Master at Thursday Island in 1952 was attributed with saving the pearl lugging fleet during a cyclone.⁴ Di Baker and family lived here from 1979 to 1983 and later, an immigrant South African family.⁵

⁴ *Brisbane Telegraph* 21 January 1952 *Pearling luggers saved* p3

⁵ Recollection of Di Baker interviewed by D Peel 16 July 2024



66 Hyde Road, Yeronga, August 2024 photo Ross MacDonald

Next door at 66 Hyde Road lived the Stalley family father Bill and son Albert were both dry cleaners, an immigrant Asian family later owned and lived in this house.⁶

⁶ Di Baker interview