

## **Olive de Malmanche (nee Gaudin)**

*I was born in Auckland in 1912. I was the youngest of five girls. The eldest died of diptheria when she was eight. We had one of the homes where the University is now. My grandparents lived next door. They had a horse and trap and every Sunday they would take their horse and trap ride. I don't remember it but my sisters all remembered it.*

*One of my sisters had diptheria twice and then infantile paralysis. It was later called polio. The Doctor thought it would be a good idea to get her out of the city and into a place with no traffic around, so my father bought a section and built a house over on the Shore in Bayswater. At that time there were only five houses there. The rest was all farmland. Of course we had our own little beach and that was a lovely, lovely childhood. I was a year old or perhaps 18 months when we moved. Now I'm 90!*

*So I was brought up in Bayswater by the beach and went to school at Belmont School, a state school. Then I went to Takapuna Grammar School for a year but they had no sports and I hated it, so I went on to St Cuthberts to finish. Each day I had to come across from the Shore on the ferry and then took the tram.*

*I finished at St Cuthberts. Then what to do? Peggy Arfeldt, who lived practically next door, was completing her second year of kindergarten teacher training and I became interested in it, so Peggy said how about coming and having a look at it? So I said I would. Mother and I went up to Myers Kindergarten and I saw these lovely little children, they really were sweet.*

*They used to have a green painted ring on the floor in those days, which they've given up. I thoroughly disapprove of that, I can tell you! Yes, and children had to put their toes on the ring, had to march around on the ring and sit on the ring. And then they'd all sing songs and then march around the room, but they had to watch that they kept in that ring! Well, they don't do it now.*

*So in 1929 I started training as a kindergarten teacher. We knew Constance Colegrove because she lived across the water and so we knew her quite well. She was nice, very nice family, really nice. Everybody liked Constance.*

*In the morning we were sent to one of the various kindergartens for a whole term. Then we all used to collect at Myers Kindergarten for lectures in the afternoon and we'd all bring our lunch after we'd finished our job at the kindergarten or wherever we were, we'd go to Myers and Constance would give us lectures.*

*There were lessons in child psychology and education and how to deal with children's behaviour and traumas in a kindergarten centre.*

*We had to make our own things, for example, we'd make a scene of something for the children. We'd cut out things from a magazine and paste*

*them, or we'd get a bit of a board and put a whole lot of plasticine on and paint it, cut bits of trees, branches, little things, just stick them around.*

*Then after kindergarten we had to take the children home because we had to walk them across the roads, you see. The kindergarten in Ponsonby was near the church if you remember, and we had to cross the road and take these children home. The children would say, "Don't cross here, cross right up the road" and I would say, "Why don't you want to cross here? Why do you want to cross down there? Much easier here?" You had to talk to them and explain and they said "You see that church there? That's the Roman Catholic one. We can't go there. If we go there, devils come and get us." So then I used to tell them that was completely untrue. I don't know how the parents liked that.*

*I started my first year at Myers and from Myers I went to Logan Campbell. It's just a wreck now, standing there. Then the next one I went to was at Ponsonby. That was the third kindergarten and the following year I went to Sunbeams, if I remember.*

*And then the next one I was sent to was Onehunga, and that was awful to get to from over the Shore, right out to Onehunga. But I liked that because when I was teaching, the Director (Head Teacher) had somebody helping, I don't remember her name. She had trained as a teacher and was interested in teaching phonetics to children and she started them on phonetics. My golly, those kids were not five, but they learnt marvellously! At the end of a year the little ones of five that I had could read anything! And they dropped it in the education!*

*We had to do two years training and we had to know how to play the piano. I played very badly but I played enough to play marches and kindergarten songs and rhymes. When I was there, every kindergarten had a piano and all the students could play. Peggy Arfeldt played like no idea! She should have been in a band she was so perfect! I wasn't perfect but at least I could play "Good Morning to you" and the nursery rhymes.*

*We had to be at the kindergarten by 9.00am and the children arrived at the same time. They had the same hours as a state school and we started at 9.00 and then we would all march around the room and sing "Good Morning" to each other.*

*It was always "Good Morning, Good Morning to everybody, Good Morning to you" and then we would sit on the ring and cross our legs and have perhaps a little story about what to do today. Then they'd get up and dance around and then they'd skip and they'd dance and skip and then walk slowly and then walk quickly and then they would march into the various rooms. I had a class and the other two students had a class.*

*They were divided into classrooms in different age groups and the two classes were separate but sometimes when they all didn't come to kindergarten one would have to go into the other class.*

*I was given most of the senior class in the beginning. The four year olds. I got on well and we had to tell stories, not read them but tell children's stories. Well having the gift to do that like all my family, I was definitely good at it and I did very well at story telling. I'd get the stories from, I'd get them from the library and I only had to read the short stories for the children and I would remember them quite easily.*

*They ran it like a state school, start at 9.00am and you get to start the day with bouncing around the circle and singing to each other and skipping and then you'd go into the room where you'd have painting, plasticine, trains anything, they could do as they liked. I used to love seeing what they drew, some of them were quite clever. Have a little break at 10.00am. The children would go out, of course we would have to go out with them and be in the playground all of the time. At Myers, they provided bread and butter in those days and sometimes even a bit of jam.*

*Later, the government provided milk and an apple. But they did have biscuits given by a manufacturer and then when they had finished their half hour in the grounds they'd come back and the senior ones would have phonetics and they thoroughly enjoyed it. The kids loved it!*

*When it was 12.00pm we would gather up our children that we were taking home. When we were in Freemans Bay we had to go in two's. Sometimes we had to go to a house when a child was not well, to see what was the matter with it, you see. If it was really sick you'd have to organise with the parents to get the doctor in. You'd never be allowed to go alone up Grey Street. After the children had gone we'd come back to Myers and have our lunch and then Constance would have lectures.*

*In 1929 when I started there must have been 10 students, I can't really remember. The ones that I became very friendly with I don't see now. Kath Stanton married a missionary and went to live in China. Judy Casement-Aitken went to England and married an Irishman and lived in Ireland. I lost touch with the pals I made.*

*Constance Colegrove gave all the lectures, every one. The only one she didn't take was eurythmics. Miss Whistler came in for that. She played the piano like a dream and she would tell us what to do. After our two years we sat exams to get our Diploma. We sat them at Myers.*

*When we got through the training and started teaching we were paid something like 25 shillings per week. Of course you see it was the depression then. Once all these girls were trained, eight or nine girls came through. But there were no jobs for them or for me because everyone was out of work. It was terrible! Those who had jobs didn't give the job up, even if they married.*

*I had two years training and then I was asked by the phonetics teacher at Onehunga to help her start a private kindergarten in Mt Albert. I had no job and I'd finished with my Diploma. She wanted a kindergarten teacher there to show her how to set it up. That's what she wanted... a private*

*kindergarten, but she had been trained as a school teacher at the training college. I went and helped her. She caught on very easily and also taught me how to teach phonetics. When she started to take the five year olds, I thoroughly enjoyed it. In the end it became a private school and she did very well out of it.*

*I worked there. Then I got exhausted and my nails became infected. The Doctor said the travelling from Takapuna to Mt Albert every day knocked me down. I gave up. I had a rest for a while then I thought I would go nursing. I thought, well, I couldn't get a job in a kindergarten because, believe me, none of the Directors would leave.*

*I applied to become a nurse. I told them I was mostly interested in child nursing. So the person I saw, she looked at me and said "Look dear, you sound absolutely ideal. That's what we want, somebody who will concentrate on the children and had kindergarten training, but I would like you to go home and have a rest and get rid of those infected nails. Come back next year and you will be the first one I will employ." I thought, that's good, I'll take up nursing and it will be ideal telling stories to the sick children and I would love that. What happened? Mr Frederic de Malmanche turned up and I married him. That's the end of that story.*