

SKY PILOT NEWS

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Mrs. Langford-Smith, Mrs. Warwick (and Heather) with some of the dark children at Marella Mission Farm.

MARELLA MISSION FARM: This home for aboriginal children is conducted by the Sky Pilot Fellowship Limited, a non-profit making company registered under the Charitable Collections Act. Donations of £1 and upwards made to MARELLA MISSION FARM are deductible for taxation purposes. This does not apply to gifts for the other work of the Sky Pilot Fellowship, so when claiming tax deductions please make sure that your donation was for Marella Mission Farm and lodge your claim in that name and not under the general name of the

Sky Pilot Fellowship. Up to 20 children—full-blood and mixed blood — are cared for at Marella. They range in age from infants to teenagers. Unfortunately lack of accommodation and shortage of finance means that many other needy dark children have to be turned away each month. This is a faith mission and is financed almost entirely by the free will offerings of sympathetic friends. Home offering boxes are available from the Secretary, P.O. Box 29, Castle Hill, N.S.W.

SKY PILOT NEWS: As explained in our last

issue, it was not possible to keep up with the regular issues of this paper during and after the illness of the Director. However we now hope to be able to catch up with the publication. As soon as the issues are up-to-date, each news sheet will cover a period of one month, as at the beginning. Meanwhile all subscriptions were extended for a further period of 12 months so that each subscriber will receive 12 separate issues although these will cover a period of 24 months.

We are reprinting some of the illustrations that were used some years ago because we feel that they will be of interest to many of our

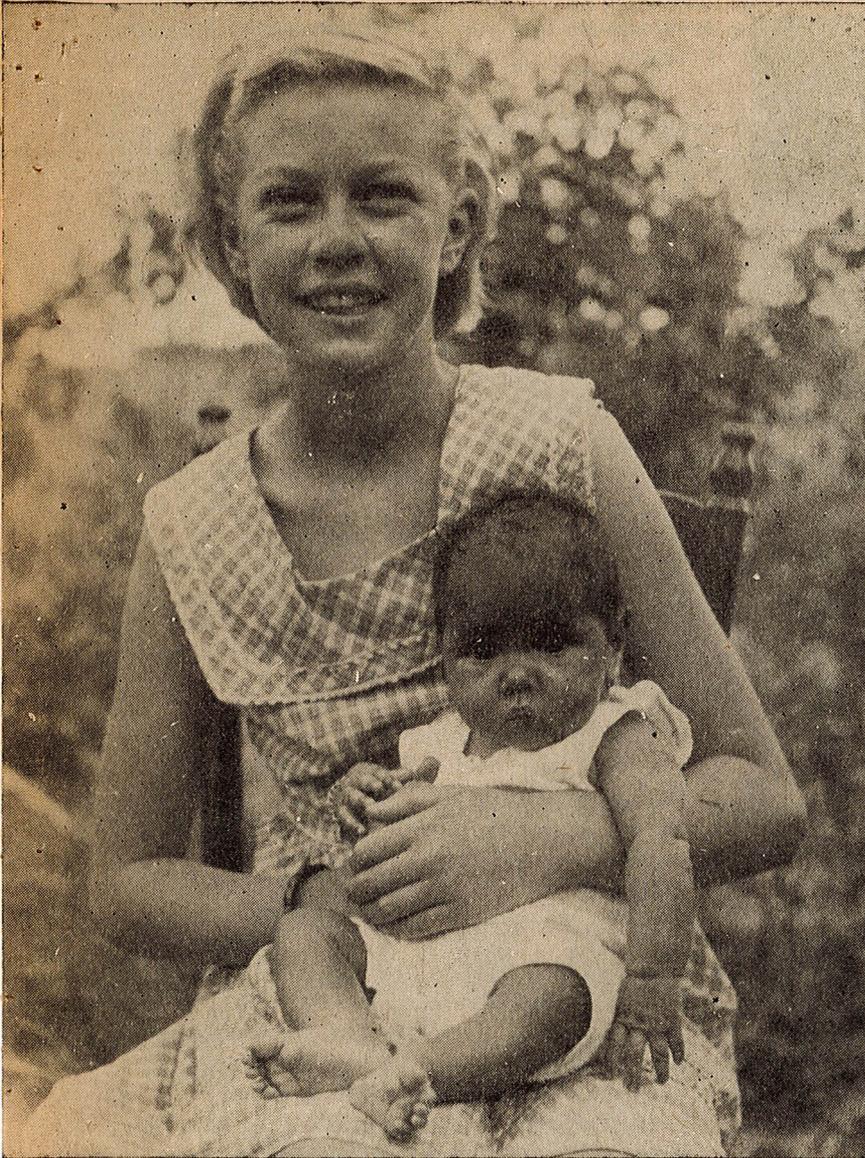
new subscribers and supporters. The work is growing so fast now that it is difficult to realise that it was not until about 1954 that the first of our dark children was admitted. Before that, of course, other dark children had stayed here for short periods. It may be said that 1954 saw the admittance of the first of the permanent boarders. In the short time since then our "family" has built up to 18 or 20—the absolute maximum number that can be cared for with our present facilities. The time has now come when we must plan ahead in order to be able to accommodate many more needy ones. We would value your prayers and your continued support.



DON'T NOBODY WANT ME?

UNWANTED:

Possibly the greatest tragedy in the life of a child is to think or feel that it is unwanted. In order for a child to be reasonably happy and to grow into normal manhood or womanhood it is essential that it should feel that it is loved and wanted; it needs a home and a sense of security. Many of the dark children are born in the slum areas of the city where housing is a real problem. This means that very often a family is split up, with one or two children remaining with the parents and the others spending their time living with various relatives or friends. They never know how long they will be at one place or with the one family; no sooner are they settled down than they have to be moved again. And this is under the "best" conditions. If one or both parents are drunkards or gamblers, as frequently happens, the children are fortunate to get enough to eat. Even when they are not actually hungry most of the time it sometimes happens that their diet is very unbalanced. When first they come to us most of them only want bread. That is all they have been used to. Many of them will not eat meat and vegetables and at first they even refuse chicken or turkey at Christmas time! It is something they have never tasted before. They mostly have had fish and chips at odd times, when the parents were tem-



Ruth Langford-Smith with Christine, in 1953.

porarily financial, but their staple diet has been bread. At the Mission Farm they gradually learn to eat (and like) meat and eggs, milk and vegetables. It is most remarkable to see the improvement in their health. Their eyes become clear and sparkling and their skin clears up as they lose the blotches and sores caused by malnutrition.

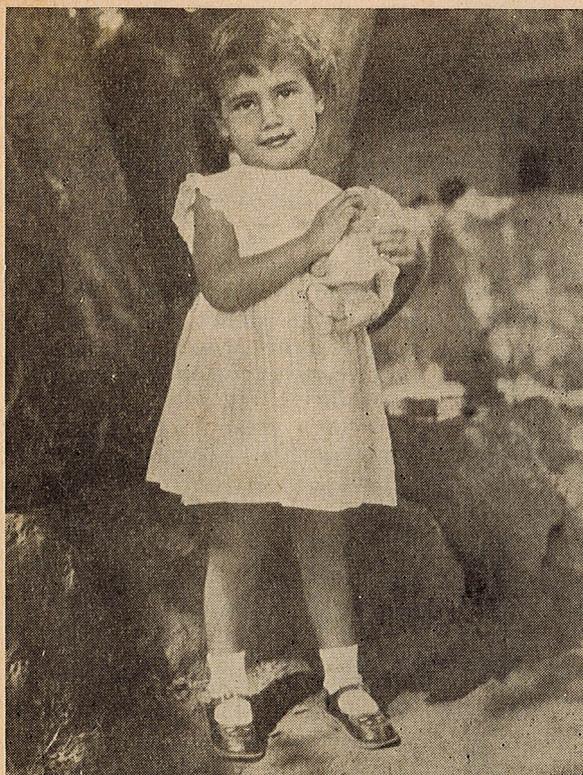
THE NEW DAM. For many years we have been greatly handicapped at the Mission Farm by lack of water. We have city water for drinking, of course, but when it comes to irrigation of the farm it is another matter. Often when it is urgently required in order to save a growing

crop the city water is unavailable owing to lack of pressure or water restrictions. The cost of city water for irrigation has more than doubled in the past few years and this, added to the uncertainty of having it when needed, has restricted the development of the farm.

We applied to the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission for assistance in providing a dam for the Mission Farm. Engineers were sent out to survey the possibilities, test bores had to be sunk to a great depth in various parts of the property and soil samples tested for suitability. Then, after the building of the dam had been approved, we had to wait some years before the Commission was able to arrange with the Rural Bank for the necessary finance.

Now the dam has been completed. When full it will hold two-and-a-half-million gallons. It will be about 100 yards long and about 80 yards wide; the main depth over 20 feet. This will supply sufficient water to irrigate the orchards and main growing paddocks. It will also make a splendid swimming pool for the older children. There is a flat shelf of rock extending for some distance where the water will not be very deep; here the children can be taught to swim. The dam has not only altered the whole appearance of the farm but it will be a tremendous boon from an agricultural point of view. It will make it possible to save many fruit and vegetable crops that otherwise would be lost, thus making the regular supply of these products available for the children.

The dam was built by W. V. Hall Pty. Ltd. The operator was Mr. George Walters. During the construction we invited Mr. Walters to stay with us to save his travelling time. It was a great pleasure to have him in our home; we have never before had any guest who was more thoughtful and considerate; and in no time we felt that he was one of the family. Afraid of being stopped by wet weather, Mr. Walters would rise before daylight, and on moonlight nights would continue working till 11 p.m. or later. When the inspectors of the Water Con-



Christine grew into a sweet and loving child.

servation Commission came out to inspect the finished dam they remarked on the satisfactory workmanship. They passed it as a first class job. That, they said, was most unusual; as a rule alterations had to be made to bring construction up to specifications. In this case no alterations had to be made. The depth of the spill-way had been estimated by Mr. Walters and the Sky Pilot with a fishing line and a line level; it proved to be within one-eighth of an inch of the required height!

The Directors of W. V. Hall Pty. Ltd. generously made a great reduction in the price they had tendered in order to help the mission. We are deeply grateful to them for this kindly act. We were very pleased, also, when Mr. Walters brought his wife and son Steve to visit us and inspect the finished dam. We feel that the provision of this dam will alter the whole outlook of the mission farm in the future and it has

come after our prayers had been made for many years.

CHRISTINE: In December, 1953, a young unmarried dark girl came to us, as others had done before, with her babe. About six weeks later they both left and we were sorry to part with them, well knowing the difficulties that faced a mother in such circumstances. It was not long before the mother found that she could not look after her babe and earn her living at the same time. The Aborigines Welfare Board became responsible for the infant and they very graciously sent her back to us. That was how Christine became a very precious member of our family. Ruth, the Sky Pilot's second daughter, took little Christine as her special charge. The years went by and the timid, shy little infant grew into a sweet and loving child, as happy as the day is long. She is now known to so many of our friends who have visited the Mission Farm, or attended our Sales of Work in the Sydney Town Hall.

Already Christine has become a little missionary. It is sweet to hear her explaining to recent arrivals something about the love of God. Often she joins in the prayers with her eyes screwed up tight and her simple faith expressed in words that must be very precious to the God of little children who gave His son for their salvation.

ONE OF MANY: Christine is only one of the many children who have now come to us. What has happened in her case will, we trust, happen in many others. Given a home, love and security these dark children respond in a wonderful way. Even new arrivals soon feel quite at home and happy with their home and playmates. Recently, when the Sky Pilot and his wife arrived back from a meeting the rush of little feet was headed by a small boy who had only been here two days. He threw his arms around Mrs. Langford-Smith, proud of being the first to reach her. Later he came to her and said, with tears in his eyes: "Them children said you aren't my mummy, but you are, aren't you?" Mrs. Langford-Smith replied: "Of course! I'm your second mummy as I am to all the others," and he went away happily.