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## A LIFETIME IN FOOD PRODUCTION

Mount Barker Courier, Mount Barker

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Food has played a key part in the life of Brian Harvey, a 94-year-old who grew up in the Hills, with his family once using the Toy Factory at Gumeracha, located behind the Big Rocking Horse, to dry potatoes for WW2 troops.

His food journey began growing produce on his family's farm at Kersbrook.

Alongside his mother and father he would take apples, cherries, plums and peaches to the market once a week.

The family business, CP Harvey and Son, would sell the fresh produce at the markets, with anything that didn't sell made into dried fruit.

During WW2 the family was asked by the Federal Government if they could dry slices of potato to be shipped to soldiers on the battleground.

As they had no power at their Kersbrook property they purchased 4ha of land at Gumeracha for £1700 and moved in on July 1, 1940.

Mr Harvey said the first shipment of dried potatoes had been sent off by November.

"We started with a wood-fired furnace, which we had to fuel from trees that were chopped from the surrounding scrubland," he said.

"It took about 1000 tonnes of wood a year to run the furnace."

The packages of potatoes were shipped to both the Australian and US armies stationed in the Philippines.

Post-war, Mr Harvey learned how to

make glacé fruit from an American captain, who taught him as a thank you for supplying them with food during the war.

"He was from California and had been involved in dried fruit over there," Mr Harvey said.

"He said if we were both still alive at the end of (WW2) he would come and teach me how to make glacé fruit."

Eventually Mr Harvey and his wife, Joan, took over the family business, but had to sell the factory after one of their biggest customers became insolvent and filed for bankruptcy.

They moved to a dairy farm at Birdwood with only \$1000 to their name, but were

able to increase their milk production from 56 litres a day to 30,000 litres.

"It was hard work, but we managed," Mr Harvey said.

"We purchased the adjoining 32ha property to house the additional cows and we were living pretty well self-sufficiently off the land."

Later the couple bought a smaller property at Balhannah where Mr Harvey worked at the Chapman's Butcher, before moving to Victor Harbor and starting an accommodation business.

Mrs Harvey died in 2018, and Mr Harvey moved into the Resthaven aged care home at Port Elliot in 2022.



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*Former Hills resident Brian Harvey helped produce dried potato slices which were sent to the Australian and US forces in the Philippines during WW2.*