

Matilda (Tilly) Louise Thompson



Saleswoman,
manager...businesswoman and
contributor



Born 28th April 1871, Ballarat
Died 7th April 1959, Ballarat

Parents had migrated to Melbourne in the 1850s and moved to Ballarat in 1870. They were respected members of the Jubilee Wesleyan Church.

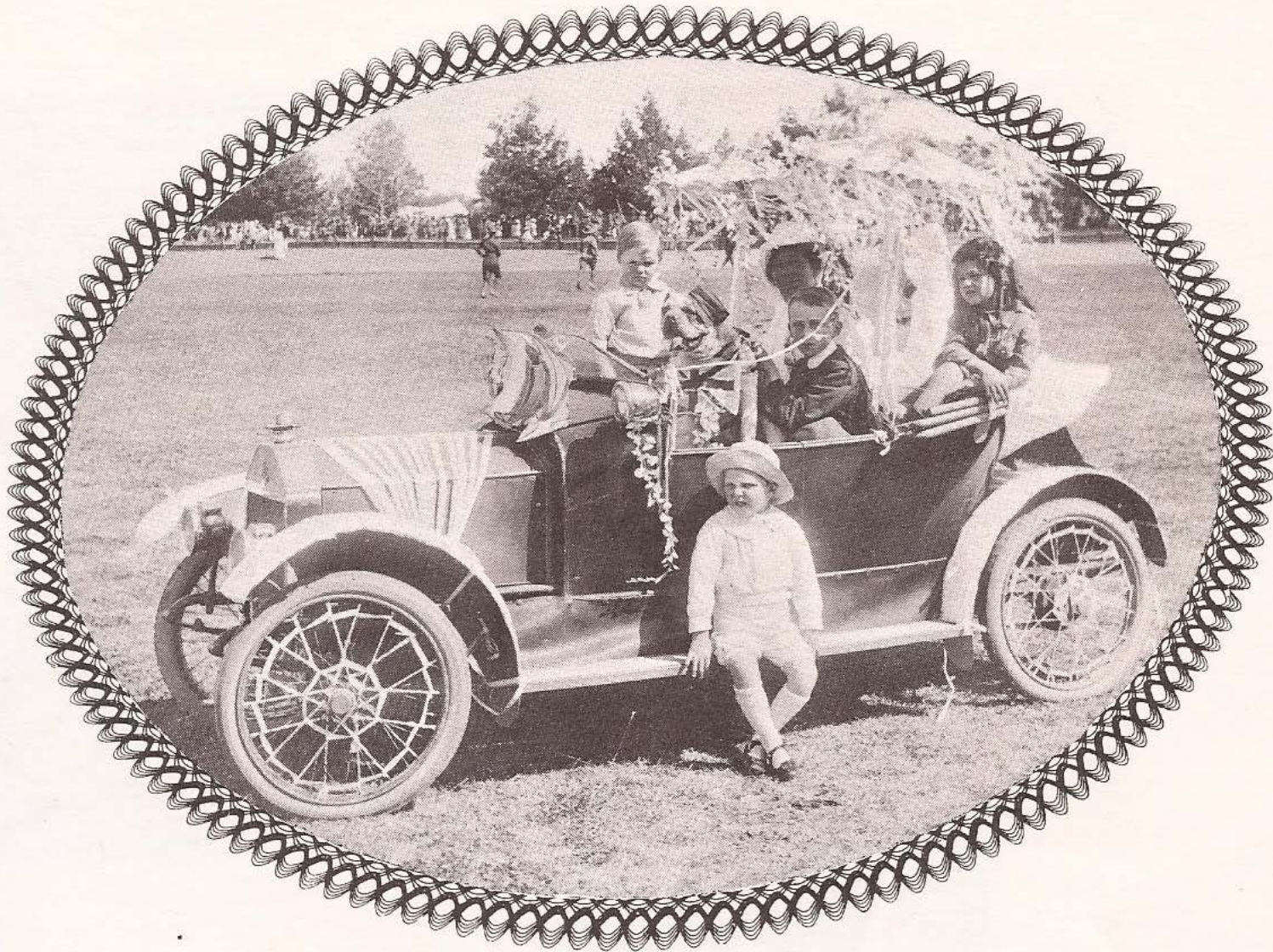
“Both at home and at Sunday School, Tilly was taught to be self sufficient and helpful: this philosophy was to remain with her.” (Mansfield, ADB)





Travelling sales lady... a woman 'of boundless and terrifying energy'!





The first travelling sales lady, Mrs Thompson, and friends



Mrs Thompson was a fiery individualist. She saw everyone else as individuals whether opposed or in alliance. Impatient and impetuous, she brooked no obstacles...

It [E.Lucas & Co] was certainly not run by conventional rules. Mrs Thompson thought nothing of taking girls from their machines to watch sunlight on a spring morning flood the hawthorn blossoms in the city gardens, or later, during the First World War, to hand out comforts and sing choruses when troop trains drew in or out of Ballarat.

Yet no one suffered from the occasional breaks in routine...

White, 1964, p. 17



Individual or company?

The secret of its [E.Lucas & Co] success was genuine co-operation among all who had part in its productivity.



At the forefront of civilian Ballarat's war effort... 1914-1918

The Lucas girls'...concerted effort was probably unequalled by any other small working group in the country...

First activity was sending comforts and parcels to the front and farewelling contingents of soldiers.





Public or private...





Ballarat's Avenue of Honor

was planted over more than two years, at a cost of £2,000, is nearly 14 miles long and contains 3,912 trees... was opened by HRH the Prince of Wales in June 1920. It stands as an impressive memorial to the Ballarat citizens whose sacrifice in the holocaust of 1914-1918 assured their city an honourable place in the history of the young Commonwealth... (White, 1964, p. 23)





Organisational culture

“Loyalty was a part of their way of life at Lucas; they were not the sort of people to question what it might cost to be loyal to the larger community outside the factory walls.”

White, 1964, p. 23.



Tilly Thompson ...after Lucas...





Later years...



Questions



Reflection

What do you think the 'need' was that inspired the Avenue of Honor?

Should individuals get credit for successful community activities?

What are some of the factors that inspire individual and community activism?



References

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Do not be too squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

