



*Ron Sharpley and grandchildren*

## Tales of the Old Days

**“There’s a storm coming. I can tell. My leg begins to ache.”**

The aching of Ron Sharpley’s leg may reflect less the approach of a storm than the rough and tumble life he has led over the past 75 years, the last 40 of which he has spent at Walgett.

“I used to live in the place I got at the moment, down by the river,” he said. “That was until 18 months ago when it was under 3 ft of water. Then I rebuilt the place where it now stands. I moved it up from the river bit by bit.”

Ron Sharpley’s place now stands on higher land on Namoi Reserve outside Walgett. But that’s as far as he wants to move. “I don’t want

to move uptown. I’m right here. I’ve got the vegetable garden around the house. I could live in a tent without any bother. I still sleep in the tent a lot of the time. I don’t like it indoors.”

His need for open spaces and easy adjustment to adversity have been characteristic of most of Ron’s life. Today he is one of the oldest residents of Walgett.

Ron was born at Angledool at the end of last century. “I’ve never been to school in my life,” he says. “I started doing fencing and other work on Habnary Station near Angledool when I was 12. About a year later my father took me away from there. So I carried my swag on walkabout, switching from job to job.”