NOBLET, NOBLETT, JAMESTOWN AND LACROSSE

John Noblet arrived in South Australia around 1852 from Ireland, migrating to the colony as a young child (7) with his parents (Joseph and Sarah) and sister. He spent 77 years of his life in Australia, witnessing and actively participating in the rapid transformation of the bush into fertile agricultural land.

John and Mary had 14 children!!! - 11 sons (John, William, Charles, George, Stanley, Arthur, Robert (Died in infancy), Walter, Cyril, Ray and Edgar) and 3 daughters (Charlotte, Lenore & Lillian).

Because John successfully carved out a life in the north, his family became pillars of the Mid-North community. His sons famously dominated the local sports scene as champion lacrosse players, and three of his sons went on to serve as notable law enforcement officers, including an Inspector in Port Adelaide, a Sergeant in Alice Springs, and a Constable in Port Pirie.

The Noblet family of Jamestown and Port Pirie is legendary in South Australian sporting history for what contemporary newspapers proudly called the “Famed Noblet proficiency on the lacrosse field."

Why did members of the same family have different spelling?

Noblet is a French diminutive meaning "Little noble" or "Young noble", and there are several reasons why some of the younger siblings changed their name from Noblet to Noblett.

Firstly, when Stan was born in Belalie in 1884, rural birth registrars, school administrators, and local church clerks in South Australia often recorded surnames phonetically. Because "Noblet" and "Noblett" sound exactly the same in spoken English, clerks naturally added a second "t" to match traditional English naming suffixes (like *Beckett*, *Bennett*, or *Garrett*). Once a variation was logged on an official school roll or civil ledger, it frequently became an individual's lifetime default.

Stan's adoption of the double "t" spelling was part of a larger trend among the younger children in the household. While the oldest brothers, like John Ernest and William Chamney, consistently kept the single "t" (Noblet) throughout their lifetimes, the youngest cohort of the 13 surviving children leaned heavily toward the alternative. It is a classic example of clerical standardization and personal branding.

The Noblet siblings and cousins would drift between the single "t" and double "t" on marriage certificates, military enrolment papers, and electoral rolls, depending on personal preference.

Interestingly in several programs and photos (1907 Australian team as an example) Bill’s surname is spelt Noblett rather than the correct spelling of Noblet, with such misspelling not uncommon to this day!

BILL NOBLET

William (Bill) Chamney Noblet was born in Belalie, South Australia in 1877, and served in the Boer War in South Africa with the 5th South Australian Imperial Bushmen in 1901-02, before returning to South Australia. He died in Adelaide in 1955 aged 77 on a tram on the way to watch a test match!

Initially he was a labourer/farmhand, probably on the family farm, but following his war service he was trained as a boilermaker, which skills he used to work for the Humphris family business in Jamestown, and later moved to Adelaide to work in the same field. Louis Humphris was the captain of the 1907 Australian team.

An article in the Sport (Adelaide) newspaper at the time stated “When lacrosse boomed he was one of the best that ever wielded a stick. A great all round athlete and sport is Mr William Noblet.”

In 1908 Bill was second in the Bay Sheffield Sprint by inches... missed out on the £50 first prize, a lot of money in those days but still got 10 quid for coming second. According to grand-nephew Peter Noblet, “History nearly repeated itself when my son James was run down in the Gift final in the mid-nineties.”

Bill’s sporting genes flowed through to son Geoff who represented Australian at test cricket as a lethal left arm fast bowler, and at his peak held the best bowling average in Australian first-class cricket.

We believe he played initially for Jamestown circa 1896 before moving to Adelaide circa 1906, initially stripped for the Iroquois Club, then for Sturt circa 1907. Bill played for Port Pirie in 1911 and 1912, as did his brothers George and Cyril.



Bill Noblet represented S.A. in lacrosse from 1904-1911 and Australia in four tests against Canada in 1907, as well as playing in the South Australian and Jamestown teams that played Canada in Adelaide.

JOHN (ERNEST)

John Ernest Noblet (known as "Ernest), was the oldest of the siblings, and while it was cited he was “A powerhouse player for the prominent Jamestown Lacrosse Club before successfully trying out for the elite South Australian state team”, the writer cannot find any photos or programs to support John or Ernest as he was known as playing for S.A.

John’s son, Hubert, played in the 1926 S.A. team at the national carnival.

CYRIL NOBLET

Cyril was 13 years younger than Bill and played for Port Pirie and the representative team for the Northern Areas.

Cyril had two daughters, Beryl and Faye. Beryl married John Edwards, who was a champion player for Brighton and represented S.A. over many years from the late 1940’s/early 1950’s. Beryl and John had four children (Vicki, Lisa, Brenton and Grantley), all of whom played lacrosse, with both Vicki (S.A. and N.S.W.) and Lisa (Victoria) playing interstate lacrosse, and Vicki represented Australia on several occasions, including the 1989 World Cup. Vicki and Lisa actually played against each other in an interstate match. Brenton also represented S.A. at junior level until his lacrosse career was ended following an horrific road accident.



Vicki & Lisa - Game on!



Sisters ready to boogie!

Craig Anderson, grandson of Cyril Noblet (His mother was Faye) commented that “My grandfather was a Pirie boy and became the country manager for Vacuum Oil Company, which became Mobil. Even when he moved to Tusmore (Cnr Hyde & Fisher Streets) he still serviced Ceduna, Port Lincoln, Port Augusta, Port Pirie, etc.

Faye had 3 children, Brian (Crewy),Linley & Craig. Both of Craig’s children played for Burnside, with Craig playing a season with Burnside around the age of 40.

GEORGE

George played for Port Pirie and the occasional game for Sturt when he moved to Adelaide. George’s son Max started Nobby’s Nuts.”

MAX (SON OF GEORGE)

Max (Maxwell Carl Noblet**,** 1913–1995) was the youngest son of George Edwin Noblet, and grew up as a prominent local athlete and lacrosse player in Port Pirie, South Australia.

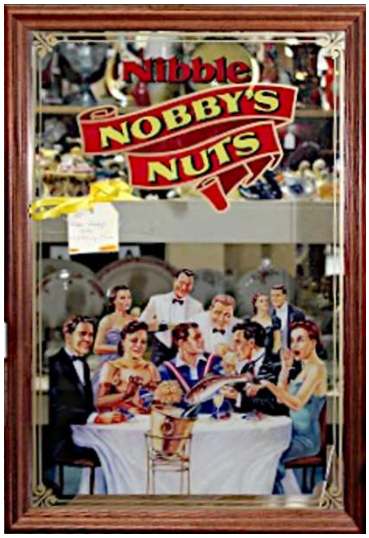
Following directly in the footsteps of his father George and his famous uncles (Ernest, William, Cyril, and Stan), Max was a celebrated athlete and lacrosse player in Port Pirie during his youth.

During World War II, he served with the 2/9th Cavalry (Commando) Regiment in the Middle East, New Guinea (Milne Bay and Buna) and Tarakan, as a commando sergeant. Max returned from the Middle East in 1942, at which time he married, then deployed to the S.W. Pacific, and returned late 1945 to Adelaide.

It was during his deployment in New Guinea that his interest in nuts began. To pass the time and create a snack, Max spent his downtime roasting peanuts on scrap metal sheets over campfires to boost morale.

In the early 1950’s Max decided to commercialise his roasting hobby, starting a small, one-man manufacturing and nut-selling street stall in Adelaide. He did everything himself from sourcing the raw nuts, roasting them to perfection using a small metal setup, and packaging them up for daily crowds.

Max was incredibly gregarious and leaned heavily on his family nickname, "Nobby", and used his booming voice to yell out what would become one of the most famous marketing hooks in Australian history - "Nibble Nobby's Nuts!"



If you haven’t had enough of Nobby’s Nuts, well try these two classic TV ads from the 80’s.

https://youtu.be/TDG-d_W9xBs

https://youtu.be/qK0O3Jdq9vg

Max realised his primary market wasn't just shoppers on the street, but the booming post-war Australian pub culture. He began hand-delivering fresh, salty packets directly to local Adelaide hotels, realising that salty snacks perfectly complemented a cold glass of beer.

By 1957, Max's one-man street stall had grown so rapidly that he officially registered the "Nibble Nobby's Nuts" trademark, firmly cementing his evolution from a front-line commando into a powerhouse of Australian snack food history.

Max sold the Nobby’s brand in 1966 and became a very wealthy man. Instead of retiring, he invested directly into commercial hotel property leases, notably the Earl of Zetland Hotel (Flinders Street) and the Rex Hotel (West Adelaide).

The transition was a natural extension of his business model, having spent the previous 15 years building relationships with local publicans to get his nuts onto their bars. He already understood the ecosystem of the classic Australian pub, and was a publican at heart. His larger than life personality, the same trait that made him a successful street hawker and a respected Army NCO, made him an exceptional publican. He was known for being highly visible on the floor, greeting patrons, and managing hotel staff with a mix of military discipline and easy-going warmth.

EDGAR (THE YOUNGEST SIBLING)

When Edgar was born in Belalie East in 1895, spelling was often treated phonetically by local birth registrars, church clerks, and school administrators.
While Edgar also played lacrosse and grew up in this athletic family environment, his sporting career was cut short by his enlistment and service overseas in World War I.

Edgar had a distinguished and extensive military career, serving Australia in both World War I and World War II. Enlisting in late 1914 as a sergeant, he was deployed with the 50th Australian Infantry Battalion to the Western Front. He rose to the rank of lieutenant and was awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty.

While serving overseas in Europe, he reportedly came across a confectionery brand that spelled its name as "Noblett". He preferred the visual look and balance of the double "t" spelling and decided to adopt it for himself, and later his business.
After WWI Edgar returned to his roots, primarily self-employed**,** managing agricultural property and farming land in the mid-north and regional districts.
Edgar returned to service during WWII to assist in the domestic war effort and military training in S.A.

Following WWII, Australia experienced a massive, unprecedented suburban housing boom. Thousands of new homes were being built rapidly, driven by returning servicemen and a wave of migration. Every one of these homes needed to be furnished. Because global shipping was still disrupted by the war, domestic manufacturing in Adelaide was heavily protected, and local demand massively outpaced supply.

When E.R. Noblett & Sons opened its doors in 1949, they didn't start out making the complex, high-end Scandinavian-style dining suites they became famous for in the late 1960’s. They began by producing simple, highly functional, heavy-duty domestic furniture. As the company grew over two decades, they actively monitored trends in Europe and the United States, adapting the dominant clean, modernist lines to suit local Australian tastes, at a time when Scandinavian furniture was coming into vogue.



With tariff reductions and cheap imports entering the Australian market, high-quality Australian factories simply could not compete on price, bringing about a significant decline in the domestic furniture industry. With Edgar passing in 1990 and the local industry in decline, the family sold the brand in 1997.

Edgar and Adelaide Noblett had three sons, David, Peter and John, with Peter and John joining their father in the furniture business.

STAN

Stan (7th child) began consistently appearing as Noblett in mid-north community records, athletic directories, and later-in-life legal notices circa 1910's.

As you can see Stan Noblett was a very big man, which would have been a major asset for him as a goalkeeper.



Stan was born in Crystal Brook and spent his youth and early adulthood in Belalie and Jamestown, where he farmed with his pioneering family and established his legendary lacrosse and football reputations. He played for Jamestown in 1907 and 1912 (Possibly intervening years) and nearby Crystal Brook in 1914 and represented S.A. in the 1908 carnival team with his older brother Bill.

There was a hiatis in lacrosse from 1915-1919 due to WW1, but he resumed his career circa 1920 and played for Holdfast Bay (A predecessor club to Glenelg) and in the 1920 S.A. team, at the age of 36.

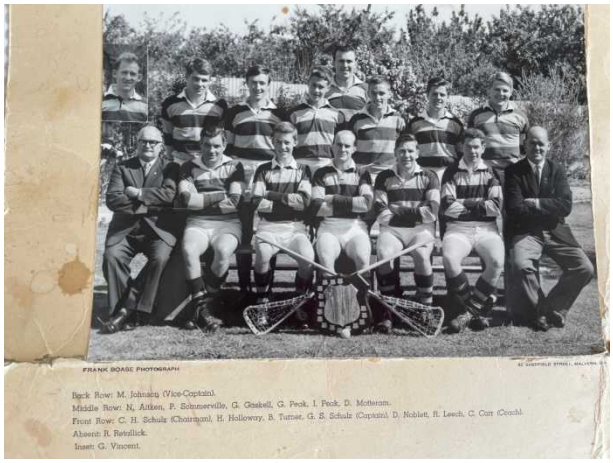
Stan spent a significant portion of his professional life serving as a police officer (Foot Constable) in South Australia. This profession aligned closely with his imposing, large physical stature, which served him well both on the sports field and in uniform.

He was stationed at Outer Harbor (Near Port Adelaide) during the 1920's.
His career in law enforcement mirrored those of his brothers; as pioneers in the mid-North region, multiple Noblet brothers transitioned from regional sports stars to notable public service and law enforcement figures across South Australia and the

Northern Territory. In his final decades, he moved into the inner-northeastern suburbs of Adelaide, residing in Collinswood, where he lived until his death in 1948.

DAVID NOBLETT (SON OF EDGAR)

David Noblett played lacrosse for both Adelaide University and Burnside. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, David was a very good A-grade player and frequently topped the goal-scoring lists. He also represented Adelaide University, competing in the 1949 Inter-Varsity Lacrosse tournament, which was hosted and won by Adelaide.



1962 Burnside B Grade premiers
(David middle of front row)

There is a bit of lacrosse royalty in this photo from days past – 2 of the 4 Peak brothers (They are related to the Edwards family going back several generations), Schulz and Carr to name a few.

CONCLUSION

What a fabulous time, although tough by today's standards, it would have been growing up in a booming agriculture hub of the north of South Australia, with Jamestown being one of the financiers and guarantors of the 1907 Canadian team, up there with the state bodies, the MCC and SACA. They produced champion lacrosse players and other sportsmen, a couple of who were in the 1907 Australian team, one as captain.

A very successful agricultural area in a successful era, when lacrosse was booming, life was improving for most, sadly world war was not far away – things were about to change on many fronts!

Within a single generation of the Belalie pioneering household, one brother's line founded Noblett Furniture (Edgar), while his nephew (Max) founded Nobby's Nuts, making this family responsible for two of South Australia's most enduring mid-century iconic brands.

A remarkable lacrosse family from a remarkable chapter of our history.

The Creator would be amused!