

Rachel McDONALD, nee McLEAN & Ewen McDONALD

Biography as published in 1985 & 1995

Rachel McLean was born 13/2/1825 in Kilmallie, Argyllshire, Scotland. She was the seventh child, and third daughter, of Christina and Donald McLean.

Ewen McDonald was born about 1818 in Inverness-shire, Scotland, probably in the valley of Strathglass near the town of Inverness. He was the son of William McDonald, farmer, and Maggie McDonald, nee Fraser.

That year the first ship fired with a steam engine, the *Savannah*, crossed the Atlantic in twenty-six days; James Watt, the Scottish engineer and developer of the steam engine, died; and Princess Alexandrina Victoria was born in London. As Queen Victoria she was to rule Britain and the scattered Empire for sixty four years.

On May 7, 1838, young Ewen set out from Strathglass, destination London. He walked to Glasgow. From there it is not known how he travelled, whether by ship, coach or again on foot. Was he alone or did he have companions? Several of his grandchildren recalled hearing that a brother had emigrated to America at the same time.

The name Ewen McDonald appears in the South Australian index of emigrant labourers from the UK who applied for a free passage to that state between 1836 and 1844. He applied on May 18, 1838, stating that he was a shepherd aged 20 years and single. The South Australian census of 1841 lists a Ewen McDonald living at Adelaide (South). It is not known whether this man was our forebear. As he boarded the emigrant ship *Pestonjee Bomanjee*, London was bustling in preparation for the coronation of Queen Victoria the following month. The *Pestonjee Bomanjee* was a teak frigate-built vessel of 595 tons, commanded by Captain J. R. Hill, and originally intended for the Indian trade. The ship had been secured for the voyage by the South Australian Commissioners after negotiations with the agents, Beck and Company.

On May 28 she left London Docks for Plymouth in Devon where Governor Gawler, the new governor for South Australia, and his party embarked. His entourage comprised his wife, her mother, seven children, a private secretary, a tutor, a governess and servants. Crowded with 230 emigrants, other passengers and a full cargo of goods, the *Pestonjee Bomanjee* sailed from Plymouth, past the Eddystone lighthouse, on June 11. Sea sickness was rife amongst the passengers and in the Bay of Biscay, noted for its choppy waters, a sudden and violent wind caught the sails and the ship heeled over nearly on her beam ends. Much of the ship's crockery was smashed in this mishap, and it was a severe loss for the rest of the voyage. About this time smallpox developed in a child of one of the emigrants. Doctor Knott isolated the child and mother in a temporary cabin erected in the longboat. All the passengers and crew were vaccinated. As a further precaution, the captain put in to Tenerife in the Canary islands to have the ship fumigated. Crossing the equator, the sailors carried out the usual boisterous celebrations for the benefit of the passengers. Two German missionaries on board conducted divine service every Sunday, but because they spoke imperfect English the other passengers found it rather hard to follow.

The ship's provisions were found to be running low so it was decided to call at Rio de Janeiro. One of the ship's officers who was familiar with the difficult entry into Rio's harbour navigated the ship into port, and they dropped anchor on August 3. Shortly after, the ship was involved in an accident with a smaller vessel, an American whaler, which was wrecked. The damage to the *Pestonjee Bomanjee* was considerable and delayed their departure for eight days. The British flagship *Stag*, also in the harbour, sent carpenters and men to assist with repairs. Just prior to this two small slave vessels had been captured by the *Stag* and brought to the port. The slaves presented a miserable sight crowded into the little ships. Six years previously the British Government had passed a Bill abolishing the slave trade in the British Empire, but elsewhere the traffic persisted.

After leaving South America it was expected that the ship would next call at Cape Town. But the captain decided against it and they proceeded across the Southern Ocean to Australia. Towards the end of the voyage the sailors

became riotous. When the captain suspended half the crew from duty he was forced to ask some of the passengers to assist in working the ship.

At last Kangaroo Island was sighted and the ship entered Investigator Strait and sailed up St Vincent Gulf. On October 12, 1838, the Pestonjee Bomanjee dropped anchor in Holdfast Bay, seven miles from the shore, 121 days from Plymouth. In a strong wind she dragged her anchors for three miles and the wags on board said the bay had the wrong name. Among the first on board to welcome the new governor, Colonel Gawler, was the acting governor, George Milner Stephen. In an official despatch Gawler wrote a graphic description of the sufferings of the emigrants on that voyage: confinements conducted in lifeboats for want of space, the overcrowding, the terrible sanitary arrangements, the behaviour of the crew, and the deplorable conditions in general.

The vessel was too big to berth in a river so the cargo and passengers had to be ferried to the beach by the ship's boats, and women and children carried ashore by the sailors. They landed on a hot summer's day and, by the time they had walked seven miles to Adelaide, they were very tired indeed. Arriving at the infant settlement, the newcomers found the inhabitants still living in slab huts, tents, reed huts and even holes in the ground. The vice-regal residence was built of wooden slabs and the gaps filled with clay, and then whitewashed. The roof was made of reeds, and frequently the thatch was so full of insects that they fell on the table during meals. Most of the food was still ship's provisions and very dear to buy.

Ewen journeyed to Sydney that year and on arrival was engaged with other men to take a flock of sheep from there to South Australia via the coast. That mob had the distinction of being the first to be successfully overlanded. The overlanders, who spent many months on the routes driving stock from one station or colony to another, enjoyed great prestige among the settlers and were treated as heroes. Many parties were feted with balls and suppers.

For the next six years Ewen worked on a station near the Murray River. Following that, he spent three years cattle droving from Melbourne to Adelaide and to the Darling River in the interior of New South Wales. On December 8, 1847, nine years after his arrival in the colony, Ewen was married to Rachel McLean by the Reverend James Farrell at Holy Trinity Church of England, North Terrace, Adelaide. Their witnesses were Sarah Douglas and Donald Stewart. Rachel was the third daughter of Donald and Christina McLean, farmers at Strathalbyn. Holy Trinity was built in 1838, and people of many denominations were married there. Mr Farrell was only the second minister at the church, and had been appointed in 1843 following the death in office of the Reverend C. B. Howard. Two years later Mr Farrell and the widowed Mrs Howard wished to marry and as there was no other Anglican minister in the colony they sought the help of the minister of the Church of Scotland. He performed the ceremony in the small stringybark church at St Marys.

Ewen had been employed as a shepherd in the Strathalbyn district by Rachel's father, Donald McLean. In the early 1840s shepherds were stationed at three-mile intervals between Strathalbyn and Lake Alexandrina to tend squatters' sheep. They grazed the sheep by day and herded them into rough yards of branches and brushwood, by night. The man slept in a temporary shelter near the yard. He led a lonely and sometimes dangerous existence; it was also his duty to protect the flock from wild dogs and Aborigines hunting fresh meat.

Some months before Ewen and Rachel's marriage, Adelaide and Sydney had been linked by an overland mail service. Family lore says that Rachel married Ewen against her parents' wishes and this story might be supported by the entry in his diary for February 10, 1865: 'Mrs. went to Strathalbyn and her mother came down with her. Never been to the Finniss before.'

However, with the help of his father-in-law, Ewen became one of the early purchasers of land along the River Finniss with William Bowman, Donald Gollan of Strathalbyn and others. The most prominent of these men in later years were Bowman and Ewen McDonald. Ewen became one of the initiators of the town of West Milang. His first land grant on the Finniss is dated October 10, 1849 and was 77 acres. This was section 2399 in the Finniss Special Survey, County of Hindmarsh. His acquisition of land in this area increased over the next eight years :-

- October 10, 1851 - Section 2355, Hundred of Alexandria - 77 acres
- December 17, 1852 - Sections 2356-57 2360 - Hundreds of Alexandrina - 258 acres
- May 3, 1853 - Section 2359 - Hundred of Alexandrina - 83 acres

- May 3, 1853 - Section 2358 - Hundred of Alexandrina - 80 acres
- May 14, 1853 - Part section 2402 - Hundred of Alexandrina - 40 acres
- May 14, 1853 - Section 2370 - Hundred of Alexandrina - 80 acres
- July 8, 1853 - Section 2435 - River Finniss - 102 acres
- April 8, 1854 - Section 2360A - Alexandrina - 85 acres
- January 15, 1857 - Thirty-six township allotments in the township of West Milang jointly with other persons.
- August 25, 1857 - Section 2471 - Glencoe - 77 acres

Glencoe is near Mt Gambler. Between 1857 and 1871 Rachel McDonald owned three sections :-

- Section 2623 - Angas Special Survey - 87 acres
- Section 2817 - Hundred of Bremer - 80 acres
- Section 2361 - Hundred of Alexandrina –

A hundred is a survey unit, usually about 100 square miles, and the oldest English name for a district. It derived from a hundred families or 100 warriors or the holders of 100 hides. These people formed themselves into groups for self-defence with powers of local self-government. The Finniss area is near the mouth of the River Finniss which empties into Lake Alexandrina. Big redgums along its banks were a major source of bark canoes for Aborigines. About ten miles north is Strathalbyn, the main regional town for early settlers. Strathalbyn is thirty-five miles by road from Adelaide, and was first settled by the Rankine brothers in May 1839 after the Angas Special Survey. William Rankine named the town Strathalbyn, from the Gaelic word *strath* meaning a valley with a river running through it, and Albyn, a corruption of Albion. He was the main shareholder of the Albion Iron Mills in Glasgow. All the first settlers were from Scotland, and others joined them in later years. They soon built a small kirk which was the beginning of the beautiful St Andrew's Presbyterian Church of today.

In April 1855 Ewen wrote to the council at Milang offering to erect a public pound for the town. The offer accepted, he built the pound on his own land, section 2360. In 1856, section 2360 was subdivided by Corporal Brooking of the Sappers and Miners, a surveying team, to form the town of Milang West. This was a private project comprising Ewen McDonald, Dr John Rankine of Strathalbyn, and Adelaide agents, Robert Stuckey, Peter Dowding Pranker and Alfred Allison. The principals of this scheme held most of these allotments for years before selling. Also in 1856, Ewen and many other settlers in the Hundred of Alexandrina, unhappy with the District Council of Bremer, petitioned the government for their own council. In May 1856 Governor Macdonnell established the District of Alexandrina and appointed five men, including Ewen McDonald, as the first district council. The council met in the post office at Point Sturt.

In the early years of his marriage, like so many other enterprising South Australians, Ewen made trips to the Victorian gold-fields following the well-worn track made by thousands who had already gone to find their fortune. Rachel would have had many fears and misgivings, left with small children and uncertain of her husband's safe return. It was often a hazardous undertaking, for much depended on the heat in summer, the long detours forced by winter floods and, of prime importance, the availability of feed and water for the bullocks along the way. These expeditions were made over a period of eighteen months, one round trip taking six months. It is thought that after he sold his goods Ewen might have travelled to Melbourne for another load to sell on the return journey. Ewen had several tricks up his sleeve to foil marauding bush-rangers who preyed on travellers both close to the goldfields and enroute through the lonely, uninhabited country of central and north-western Victoria. He bored holes into the axle bed of his bullock dray; the gold sovereigns, perhaps even small nuggets, were wrapped in oilskin, placed far back into the hole, the hole plugged with a round piece of wood sawn off flush with the axle bed and then smeared with grease and dirt. Hung on the side of the dray was a bullock horn containing animal fat for use as axle grease; this too held sovereigns stuffed deep into the tip of the horn. On several occasions he was held up by bushrangers and, although they might have stolen some of his goods, Ewen boasted that he never lost any money. He did well financially from these trips, and the purchase of 258 acres in 1852 might have been the direct result.

It is not known what type of dwelling he and Rachel lived in at first but eventually they built a stone house roofed with slate. He named his property *Balmarino*. Reading through Ewen's two surviving diaries it is possible to form an idea of the type of farm he ran. During 1865 he produced about 4,000 bushels of wheat for sale plus wheat for

seed sold separately. There was also a barley harvest and sales of lucerne and barley seed. He appeared to own a winnower and thrashing machine, and used them to do contract work for his neighbours. His permanent working man at the time was Billy Nash. Constant work was done in vegetable gardens, and he mentions hops, onions, peas, turnips, carrots, lettuce, potatoes, radishes and pumpkins. Possibly some of these vegetable crops were grown for sale. There was an orchard and, on several occasions, he planted mulberry trees. During November that year members of the family found swarms of bees which were all taken home and no doubt placed in hives.

Ewen kept meticulous daily weather records, and took advantage of any rain to work his fallowed ground. In 1865 he paid two men £3 each to shear 240 sheep each. There is no mention of wool sold from approximately 500 sheep so it would seem that this was not the most important source of farm income. It would appear that the main income was from grain. He ran cattle, occasionally killing one for meat. There were milking cows, and working bullocks for pulling carts, ploughs and machinery. The family had their favourite riding horses and he mentions some of them by name. Like most farmers he named his paddocks for identification, generally after some feature of the area, and quotes the Lime Kiln paddock, the Skin-em-alive paddock, the Lower paddock, the Plain paddock, the Lucerne paddock, Rose Bank paddock, Shea-Oak paddock, Peppermint paddock and the Bay of Biscay paddock. This contained ground with an uneven surface, named ironically after the rough waters of the Bay of Biscay.

Ewen made numerous trips to Adelaide, we learn from his diaries, and occasionally stayed at the Vine Inn, first licensed in 1850 and situated at Glen Osmond.

A book of Ewen's, in the possession of a family member reveals Ewen's regard for Dr John Rankine of Strathalbyn
Memoir of Dr John Rankine

*Late physician in connection with
the Glasgow Homeopathic
Association
by the Rev. Alexander Andrew
Free Church, Busby
GLASGOW
Maurice Ogle & Company 1866*

On the flyleaf of this book is written in Ewen's hand:

May 2nd 1868

This book was kindly send by Mrs William Rankine of Glenbar near Strathalbyn. Having known Dr John Rankine Esq for 18 years having contracted important bussiness(!) with him at different times in various ways and always found him a Gentleman and a friend. I regreted(!) his death. I value the book very much -

Ewen McDonald

At the back is written:

I was in the boat with Dr Rankine when the smally mouse colour bullock upset the boat and inflicted an injury on the Dr's ribs he was often pleased to mention the affair with becoming humour.

Ewen McDonald

The same bullock I took to Adelaide three different times and escaped from the slaughter yard found his way to the island and crossed the River Murray 400 yards wide and very deep.

E. McD.

The incident of the upset boat, the bullock, and the doctor, is described in *Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia*.

The doctor bought, in the first instance, 600 head of cattle and 70 horses and had his runs alongside Lake Alexandrina and on Hindmarsh Island, on which he built a house for his own accommodation and that of his stock-keepers; the dwelling his people were pleased to call, The Castle. On the opposite side of the lake another house was erected to accommodate his employees, and from that point to the other side, 'Rankine's Ferry' ran. Here the doctor met with an accident which almost proved fatal. Crossing one day from Hindmarsh Island to the mainland with cattle, he tied one of the animals to the stem of the little craft with a rope, intending that it should swim behind. Holding the rope in his hand the doctor sought to pull the animal after him with difficulty. The obstinate creature plunged into the deep water and set out for the other side,

finally getting close to the craft and completely upsetting it. The doctor and the person with him were capsized into the water, and the rope becoming twined around Dr Rankine's neck, he was well nigh strangled. With great presence of mind he untwisted the rope while his companion with difficulty righted the boat, and the doctor's life was saved.

In the 1850s Mathew Rankine, son of William and nephew of Dr John, kept a diary of his farming activities. This diary is now in the Strathalbyn National Trust Museum. The entry on May 23, 1854 records that he was fencing with wire and that it was a bad job. Also on that day he bought two steers from Ewen McDonald at 18 each.

At their home, *Balmarino*, on March 21, 1871 their eldest daughter, Annie, was married to Walter John Tucker. The young couple made their home on the Tucker property *Lake View* near Strathalbyn.

It was about this time that South Australians heard of good land becoming available in the Victorian Wimmera district. Following the Victorian Land Act of 1869 large areas of country, formerly squatters' leasehold runs, were surveyed and thrown open for selectors. Any person over the age of 18 could select up to 320 acres of first-class land, peg each corner of the block with his name then apply to the nearest land board. The land cost £1 an acre with payment over twenty years. The selector paid 1/- an acre a year, generally a six-monthly payment of £8. After three years, if the rents had been paid and the land fenced, the selector could ask for a Crown lease. So Ewen, at the age of 55, and Rachel aged 50, made a momentous decision, to leave their established farm and comfortable stone house and to become pioneers for the second time. During his droving days and trips to the diggings he had gained first-hand knowledge of Western Victoria, and was not leading his family into unknown territory. In 1872 areas of land leased by Alexander Wilson's Vectis station were opened for settlement. Vectis was named from the Roman name for England's Isle of Wight. It was to part of Vectis, a district today named Noradjuha, Aboriginal for 'place of wind', that Ewen and Rachel decided to come. Many families known to them in the Strathalbyn district also migrated to the Wimmera. Among them were the Thomas McDonalds, Motts and Raggatts. All had growing sons and the need for more and cheaper land.

Ewen and Rachel sold *Balmarino*, also called *Watulunga*, to William Rogers in 1873. The property was amalgamated with the Rogers family holdings and worked by Rogers and his two sons, William Sandergrove Rogers and Edwin Rogers. In 1890 it was sold to the Waterhouse family. From 1896 portions of this once large property were gradually sold off and there were many owners in the next forty years. In 1935, Glen Wellington Kennedy bought the old *Watulunga* homestead and several of its nearby sections. His descendants still live there.

Before their departure from Lower Finniss they had two grandchildren, born to Annie and John Tucker. Their own family was now well grown, Flora 23 years, Margaret 22, William 21, Charlie 20, Mary 17, James 15, Johnny 12, Angus 9, and Jenny 7 years.

It was the custom for the men to make the journey to secure their selections before returning for the rest of the family. Ewen, William and Charlie pegged their land at Noradjuha on April 6, 1874 and applied for their licences at Horsham. It was not until two months later that the girls, Flora, Margaret and Mary pegged and applied for their blocks. It is not known how many implements or how many sheep and cattle they brought with them but it is known that the dray Ewen used to cart to the diggings, still with the secret hiding place, formed part of their equipment on the overland trek. They set out in late autumn of 1874, crossing the River Murray at the Wellington ferry, and made their way to the Wimmera via the Coorong, about 300 miles. The Coorong is an inlet of flat, shallow salt water bordered by sandhills, stretching sixty miles to the east from the Murray mouth. It was slow jolting progress with the bullock wagons. A young man, Bill Raggatt, accompanied the McDonald party. At the South Australian-Victorian border they were required to pay customs duty on 'old chattels and farming implements' amounting to £15 a family, with higher costs on ploughs and strippers.

Their land was five miles south of the tiny settlement of Noradjuha and twenty-two miles south-west of the small town of Horsham. Ewen's allotment was number 56 Parish of Carchap, County of Lowan, with an area of 319 acres 3 roods 33 perches. The purchase price was £320, and the final payment was made in 1883.

James pegged his block on January 10, 1879. There were then seven blocks totalling over 2,000 acres which for a few years were worked as a family unit. These family farms, then as now, made a considerable difference to the income because family labour saved outside wages, and relatives combined to hire or buy machinery.

At first most of the settlers lived in wattle and daub dwellings, sometimes of several rooms. These were constructed of upright pieces of wood about three to four inches in diameter, either of small saplings or split stuff driven into the earth as close as possible. Heavier trunks were used as corner posts and the walls were then plastered inside and outside with mud. Sometimes a coat of whitewash was applied to the inner wall but often it was covered with successive layers of newspapers. As they prospered, better materials were used in later houses.

To hold their land the selectors had to make annual improvements, and these are listed in the Lands Department records. Ewen built a house with an adjacent woolshed beside a track which eventually became a main road. In years to come this became a landmark, Charlie Mac's woolshed. The area was mainly timbered with buloke trees, and they blazed a trail to Noradjuha on the bark.

When Ewen applied for lease of the Crown land on October 6, 1877, he was able to list improvements :-

- Fencing
 - Post and three-rail, split stuff. 13 chains at 20 shillings a chain. The 20 shillings a chain is the value of the work if a landholder paid wages for fencing.
 - Post and two-rail, 48 chains at 20 shillings a chain.
 - Log fence, 15 chains at 12 shillings.
 - Chock and log, 58 chains at 10shillings
 - Brush fence, 75 chains at 3 shillings.

A log fence was made by pulling logs into line and piling them on top of one another. Chock and log fence was made of logs 12 to 15 feet long with a chock about two feet long across the end of the logs as a spacer. Building took time and heavy lifting.

- Cultivation
 - First year, 2 acres of wheat yielding 4 bushels an acre.
 - Second year, 12 acres, 8 bushels an acre.
 - Third year, 21 acres, 8 bushels an acre for a total 35 acres at 8 shillings an acre.
- House
 - Weatherboard with iron roof, 24 feet by 13 feet, valued at 100 pounds.
- Outbuildings
 - Weatherboard, 15 feet by 15 feet, 16 pounds value; 12 feet by 18 feet, 10 pounds.
 - A dam, 845 cubic yards, valued at 42 pounds 5 shillings.
 - A well, 94 feet by 5 feet, with windlass and trapdoor, valued at 68 pounds 18shillings.
 - Two small waterholes, 5 pounds.
- All other improvements
 - Barn, stable and cart shed, 85 pounds.
 - A garden, 20 pounds.
 - One acre cleared and grubbed for trees, 10 pounds.
 - Clearing and grubbing 35 acres at 35 shillings an acre.
 - A horse yard, 8 pounds 8 shillings.
 - A stack and stock yard, 45 pounds.
 - Miscellaneous, 40 pounds.

Improvements total 630 pounds 16 shillings.

The dwelling contained six rooms, and Ewen's family lived with him. His land was enclosed by boundary fences. His address was: Care of the Natimuck(!) Post Office.

In 1877 a post office was established at Noradjuha with James Treadwell as postmaster. He combined this position with a flourishing blacksmith's shop and later became the local funeral director. State school number 1930, Noradjuha, also opened that year, and among the first pupils were Angus and young Rachel Jane. During the 1880s the Postal Department left a loose bag at Ewen and Rachel's house for mail distribution to the Carchap district now absorbed into Noradjuha and Jallumba districts.

The Victorian Government Gazette, 1893, page 955:

Conveyance of Mails 1893-94-95-96. No 83. To and from Noradjuha and Harrow via McDonalds, Clear Lake and Douglas three days a week.

By 1890 all but the two youngest children were married and, apart from Annie, Margaret and Jenny, were living in Horsham district. Eventually only Ewen, William and Charlie remained on the original selections.

Before the railway reached Horsham in 1879, Ewen washed his wool clip in nearby lakes or swamps to remove grease and make a lighter load for carting by road to Portland or the railhead at Stawell. A bill of sale from Dennys Lascelles, Austin and Co. of Geelong, dated October 16, 1891 shows wool sold on behalf of Ewen McDonald of Carchap Loose Bag, Norajuha.

- 11 bales 1st COM – $8\frac{1}{4}$ pence valued at 8d a pound.
- 3 bales pcs/bls — $5\frac{1}{2}$ pence valued at $4\frac{1}{4}$ d.
- 1 bale locks — $2\frac{1}{2}$ pence valued at 2d.

Rachel travelled to Strathalbyn in the September of 1893 to visit her daughter Annie who was very ill. Annie eventually recovered.

The reminiscences of some of the grand-children give a series of impressions of Ewen.

- Grandfather was a small, thin man who walked like the wind with his hands behind his back. He had a moustache and beard, and always wore a glengarry cap. He had a hooked nose, and Grandmother had a pug nose; it came at intervals in the family. Grandmother was a churchy person but Grandfather knew all the swear words.
- When Grandfather was young he had been offered land at Albert Park, now an inner suburb of Melbourne, but he refused, thinking the soil too poor and low-lying for agriculture.
- Grandfather smoked black twist tobacco and drank black tea so strong you could stand a spoon in it.
- Grandfather and Grandmother lived in a two-roomed hut with a dirt floor and a big fireplace across the whole of the wall with a hole in one side where they pulled a big log through to burn.
- When Grandfather lived in South Australia he had a favourite horse called Toby, and he rode it to Adelaide once to complain about the Aborigines. The Aborigines used to say about Grandfather: "Ewen, he all jaw like a sheep's head!". What they meant we don't know.
- When Grandfather was on the farm at Finnis he had an old shepherd, Gibby McNichol, working for him. If the blacks came worrying the sheep Gibby would fire a gun as a signal and Grandfather would gallop to his help. Once old Gibby went to the blacks' camp and asked a lubra whether he could buy a fish, and he would pay her in the morning. She replied: "You pay 'em in the morning, you have fish in the morning."
- I remember the old wagon with the secret hole in it. It was on the place till it rotted away.
- Grandfather and Grandmother had Scots accents.
- Our aunts were known by their married names. That is, our great-aunts, Grandmother's sisters, who came to visit at Noradjuha. There was Aunt Johns and Aunt Jeff and others.
- Our uncles were often known by their initials, just C.S. or D.W. or A.J. and so on.
- Grandmother often helped as midwife when babies were born at Noradjuha.
- I remember being told that when they all came from South Australia supplies ran out and for a while they had to eat boiled wheat and molasses.

Ewen died at his home on July 14, 1905 aged 87, and was buried in Nurrabiel cemetery. Rachel lived for another three years, cared for at the home of her eldest son, William, his wife Christina and their children. She died on August 20, 1908 aged 85, and was buried two days later on a cold wet afternoon. The hearse was drawn by two

black horses owned by her grandson Archie Raggatt. In both cases the undertaker was James Treadwell. There is no headstone for either grave.

Ewen and Rachel both arrived in the colony of South Australia within two years of its founding and were part of the early history of that state. They and their family of ten lived during the long Victorian age and the heyday of the British Empire. However, although they were the pioneers it could be said that their children, all born in Australia, were the first true settlers of the new country. The eldest child, Annie, was nineteen years older than the youngest, Jenny, virtually making them a generation apart. Ewen and Rachel had a total of sixty-nine grandchildren born during a span of thirty-four years.

Ewen and Rachel never saw Scotland again, and it was not until two generations later that a link was made with the old country when many grandsons joined the armed forces during World War One and served in Egypt, Palestine, England and France. Some of the lads managed to go to Scotland on leave and triumphantly sent letters and postcards home to Australia.

Thirty-six years after landing in South Australia, Ewen and Rachel became part of the history of another state, Victoria. Today, one hundred years later, the land they cleared at Noradjuha, lies directly under the air route from Adelaide to Melbourne. Six miles above, the jet planes streak across the sky, covering the distance in less than an hour.

Diary : Ewen McDonald's diaries for 1864 and 1865 are in a separate PDF document.

Children of Rachel and Ewen :-

1. Annie McDonald – born 8/10/1848. Married Walter John Tucker. See biographies 5122
2. Flora McDonald – born 8/9/1850. Married Joseph McDonald. See biographies 5136
3. Margaret McDonald – born 4/11/1851. Married Charles Mott. See biographies 5146
4. Donald William McDonald – born 6/3/1853. Married Christina Cameron. See biographies 5156
5. Charles Stuart McDonald – born 1854. Married Ellen Hutchinson. See biographies 5161
6. Mary McDonald – born 30/7/1857. Married William Raggatt. See biographies 5168
7. James Francis Ewen McDonald – born 31/5/1859. Married Annie Fyffe Mossman. See biographies 5178
8. Alexander John McDonald – born 28/10/1861. Married Jessie Sheridan. See biographies 5180
9. Angus McDonald – born 11/6/1865. Married Flora McArthur Stevenson. See biographies 5189
10. Rachel Jane Cheriton McDonald – born 30/1/1867. Married John Donaldson. See biographies 5190

- SOURCE : This biography was from page 39 of "History of Ewen & Rachel McDonald & Descendants" by Jill McDonald which was originally published in 1985. It was republished as part of "The History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants" in 1995.
- COLONIALISTS : Christina and Donald McLean and their ten children migrated from Argyllshire to South Australia in 1837. This was in the earliest years of the colony. The McLeans initially settled near Adelaide where they grew the first wheat crop in SA. Then in about 1840 they pioneered the Strathalbyn area. There are now well over 20,000 descendants spread across Australia and elsewhere.
- CHANGES : Please contact us with additions, corrections or suggestions about any part of this family tree.
- CONTACT : Visit our website www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com or Strathalbyn Museum phone 08 8536 2656 to discover more about your family – and about privacy and copyright.