

William John TUCKER

26-8-1880 to 7-3-1882

Biography as published in 1985 & 1995

William John was the seventh child and sixth son of Annie and John Tucker and was born at *Eldon House*. Two of his first cousins were born that year, Jessie McDonald at Nurrabel, Victoria, and Grace Raggatt at Carchap, Victoria. His grandparents were Rachel and Ewen McDonald and great-grandparents were Christina and Donald McLean.

In that year the De Beers Mining Corporation was formed in South Africa by Cecil Rhodes and the French composer Jacques Offenbach died. Rabbits became established in South Australia and New South Wales.

William was the last child born at *Eldon House* and when the family moved to *Lake View* he was caught several times heading in the direction of his former home. When he was eighteen months old, and his brother Jim just six weeks, he disappeared again and this time followed a mob of sheep. The searchers lost his tracks. The weekly Strathalbyn newspaper, the *Southern Argus*, dated March 9, 1882 tells the tragic story.

SAD CASE
INFANT LOST IN THE SCRUB
FOUND DEAD

Considerable excitement was created in Strathalbyn on Monday afternoon last (6th) by a rumour that a little son of Mr. John Tucker of Sandergrove, had strayed away from home and could not be found. Several hours later the rumour was confirmed, with the painful intelligence that the child had not yet been discovered and, on enquiry being made, it was found that the little fellow, aged about a year and a half, had been missed soon after 10 o'clock in the morning, and though at once searched for, could not be found. Neighbours promptly turned out and joined the search, and though a most careful and thorough exploration for a good radius was made, the night sped on and morning came, but no trace of the missing child could be found. On this news reaching Strathalbyn, a large number went from here to assist in the search, and from all round willing helpers came till at length a very large party were scouring the neighbourhood. Early on Tuesday afternoon the little one's hat was found about 4 miles from home, and foot tracks discovered in the sand. These unfortunately were not of much service, for they were only here and there to be seen, and when night crept on again, still the party seemed no nearer their goal. But at about 3 o'clock on Wednesday morning a few seekers came suddenly on the object of their search, lying on the moonlight night, resting from its weary wanderings in the calm sleep that knows no waking to earthly cares and troubles — that sleep that we men call "Death" — probably the result of sun stroke — the sun being unusually powerful the last few days. The sad news was soon circulated, and the little sleeper conveyed to his former home, where the heartbroken parents received the earnest condolences of all the large party who had taken part in the search. The utmost sympathy is felt all over the district for Mr. and Mrs. Tucker, and the affair has cast quite a gloom over our town. After some enquiry it was deemed unnecessary to hold an inquest.

Still to be seen at *Lake View*, carefully wrapped in an old huckaback towel, are the clothes William wore that day: a coat, rompers, a pair of maroon socks with white toes and heels, tiny elastic-sided boots, a lock of golden hair, two single shillings and a threepenny piece. He is buried in the family cemetery at Sandergrove.

- SOURCE : This biography was from page 86 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.