

Margaret MOTT, nee McDONALD 4-11-1851 to 17-1-1932 & **Charles MOTT**

Biography as published in 1985 & 1995

Margaret was the third child, third daughter of Ewen and Rachel McDonald and was born in South Australia. Her grandparents were Christina and Donald McLean.

The year of her birth, 1851, was a landmark in Australian history, for payable gold was discovered near Bathurst, NSW, and at Clunes in Victoria. The rush was on. Within the next ten years Australia's population almost trebled. South Australia became the first colony in the empire to separate church and state, which meant the abolition of government aid to religion. In the United States of America, Isaac Singer perfected his sewing machine, and in England the artist J. M. W. Turner died.

It is not known how Maggie received her schooling, but it is probable that she was taught by a governess. Also, she might have attended Mrs Bell's school for young ladies in Pennington Terrace, Adelaide. Later, she was to state on her application form for land in Victoria, that her occupation was schoolmistress of Strathalbyn, South Australia.

Maggie was twenty-two years old when she accompanied her family to Noradjuha in Victoria. On June 24 1874 she pegged her block, allotment 24, Parish of Nurrabiel, County of Lowan, comprising 320 acres 10 perches. On March 16, 1879, Christina Cameron of Lake Hindmarsh applied for licence of allotment 24, Parish of Nurrabiel. This allotment is described as having been forfeited by Margaret McDonald. On July 9, 1888. Christina Cameron. by then Mrs Christina McDonald, was granted lease of this block. The land adjoining this block was leased by Ewen McDonald and Donald William McDonald. the latter having married Christina in 1879.

On December 21, 1876 at the Horsham Presbyterian Church, Margaret married Charles Mott, and the witnesses were Samuel Penrose and Eliza Mott. Charles was born at Echunga, near Adelaide, on September 11, 1848 and was a son of Joseph and Eliza Mott, nee Wakefield. Joseph Mott was born in Essex, England, and had come to South Australia in 1838, where he obtained a farm at Mt Barker. In 1846, at the age of 26 years, he married Miss Eliza Wakefield in Adelaide, and in the 1880s he was married a second time, to Mary Ann Austin. The *Adelaide Almanack* for 1864 and 1865 lists a Joseph Mott, stockholder of Lower Finniss in the district of Alexandrina. About 1868, Joseph and his family took up land near Hamilton in Victoria. Eliza died on October 3, 1877 and Joseph died on March 1, 1908.

Charles Mott's name, with that of his sister Mary Ann, first appears in the Wimmera Shire rate book in 1873 for land at Natimuk. On the application form for land their address was given as Hamilton, Victoria. In 1874, they are joined by the name of David Mott, a brother, all having land at Arapiles, a more specific area a few miles west of the township of Natimuk. In 1875 the names of William and Eliza Mott appear as farmers of Natimuk. The next year, 1876, gives the first details of their land. David Mott had 285 acres of pasture, 35 acres of cultivation and had erected fencing and a dwelling. Mary Ann Mott had 288 acres of pasture. 32 acres of cultivation and a dwelling and fencing. Charles Mott had 287 acres of pasture, 32 acres of cultivation and had erected a dwelling and fencing. William Thomas Mott had 316 acres 1 rood and 30 perches which had fencing but no cultivation or dwelling. Eliza Mott had 132 acres with fencing only but by the following year she had 12 acres cultivated and a dwelling erected.

The year 1878 has the last listing of the five Motts in the shire rate book. The property was then bought by a Mr Fletcher and sold a year later to the Lange family which is still in possession. On this property in 1953. Lou Lange grew a crop of Pinnacle wheat which won the southern Wimmera championship and the Australian championship

The judged area of fifty acres yielded 76.8 bushels an acre, a national record beaten some years later by a crop at Murtoa in the eastern Wimmera.

Charles and Margaret's first child, William Joseph, was born at Coleraine, Victoria, in 1877 and their second, Sydney Victor, in New South Wales in 1879. About 1878 they had left Victoria with Charles' brothers, David and William, and the party had travelled to the Darling Downs in Queensland. Here William settled near Dalby, while David Mott pushed further north before finally choosing his land. Charles and Margaret left Queensland and settled on a property called *Rockwell* near Gunjerwarildi in the Warialda district of northern New South Wales. Maggie's life was difficult during her early married years: long distances travelled in jolting carts over unmade roads; babies born mostly without medical aid, far from the help of relatives. It is said that at one time her helpers were local Aboriginal women. Truly, Maggie was one of the brave pioneer women.

While living on *Rockwell*, Charles was so incensed by a miserable offer of £3 a head for a line of his finest bullocks that he opened a butcher's shop in Warialda in protest. It is said that if one of his sons did not play well in the local football matches father would condemn him to turning the mincing machine handle for the next week. During a severe drought in 1898 Charles agisted sheep on a property called *Springmount* near Black Mountain, south of Guyra, high up in the New England tableland. He liked the place so well that he bought it and moved his family there, while still retaining *Rockwell*. His new property, *Springmount*, was their home until they retired to Armidale. Many of Charles and Maggie's friends had gloomily predicted that his sheep would die of footrot on *Springmount* with the thirty-inch rainfall. In later years he was heard to remark that it was just as well people had believed that, otherwise there would not have been standing room. Charles purchased two other properties, *Ben Lomond* and *Glendon* near Glen Innes. *Ben Lomond* was later sold. Eventually *Glendon* became the property of Guy and his son Bill and was sold about 1980.

Four sons of Maggie and Charles joined the armed forces during World War One, Sydney in the Australian Flying Corps; James, Harold and Colin in the 1st AIF. All served overseas and all returned home.

Margaret and Charles sold *Springmount* in 1926 and retired to a house, *Belmore*, on the corner of Marsh and Brown streets, Armidale. The grandchildren have fond memories of Christmas and other family gatherings at *Springmount* and *Belmore*.

Charles was one of the founding fathers of the New England University College established in Armidale in 1928, now the University of New England. During the depression years he gave a cheque for £1,800 with the promise of more if necessary.

During her long life Maggie was respected and loved by all who knew her. In the early 1930s she suffered a stroke which left her in poor health until she died on January 17, 1932, at Armidale, aged 80 years. Charles died five years later, on September 26, 1937, two weeks after his 89th birthday. They are both buried in Armidale cemetery. The *Armidale Express* reported Maggie's death.

*MRS. CHARLES MOTT
DEATH LAST NIGHT
AT 80 YEARS OF AGE*

The district has lost one of its best known and most highly respected residents by the death at her home in Marsh Street, Armidale, at a late hour last night of Mrs. Charles Mott. Mrs. Mott who had been ailing for some time, attained her eightieth birthday in November last. Formerly Miss Margaret McDonald of Finnis, Sth. Australia, she married Mr. Charles Mott at Horsham in Victoria. Both her parents, Mr. & Mrs. Ewen McDonald, had come to Australia from Scotland. After leaving Horsham Mr. & Mrs. Mott settled at Warialda, later moved to New England and settled at "Springmount" where they remained for many years. The late Mrs. Mott is survived by her husband (who, though 83 years of age, is in excellent health) in addition to a large family comprising Messrs W. .J. Mott (Warialda), S. V. Mott (Penrith), J. A. Mott (Glen Innes), D. M. Mott (Llangothlin), G. Mott (Glen Innes), C. D. Mott (Stockton, Armidale), H. A. Mott (Glen Innes); Mesdames R. Hawken (Brisbane) and J. Dowrie (Brisbane).

On September 18, 1936, the Armidale Express published a biographical article about Charles.

*STRUGGLES OF THE PIONEERING DAYS
TOLD IN THE LIFE STORY OF MR. CHARLES MOTT
BACK FROM THE GOLDFIELDS TO REAP
"GOLDEN HARVEST"
UNIQUE FAMILY GATHERING AT
"ELMGROVE"*

Hardships, suffering, disappointments and unremitting toil on the one hand, and courage, determination, constancy and probity, on the other, may be described as the warp and weft of the life fabric of Mr. Charles Mott of Armidale, one of the splendid pioneers of South Australia, who suffering many reverses in four different States, ultimately won well merited prosperity in New England where he settled in 1898.

Mr. Mott, who is still in remarkably good health, celebrated his 88th birthday last Friday, and the occasion was marked by a family reunion at the home of Mr. and Mrs. L. M. Mott, "Elmgrove" Llangothlin.

The reunion was complete. the following members being present: Mr J. A. Mott (Glen Innes), Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Mott (Warialda), Mr. S. V. Mott (Penrith). Mr. G. Mott (Glen Innes), Mr. H. Mott (Glen Innes), Mrs. Hawken (Brisbane), Mrs. Dowrie (Brisbane), Mr. and Mrs. Col Mott (Armidale) and Mrs. Williams and daughter (Armidale).

Mr. and Mrs. Len Mott and members of their family spared no effort to make the occasion a memorable one. The tables arranged to accommodate approximately 50 guests were artistically decorated with a profusion of flowers, many of which came from Brisbane. Mr. J. A. Mott presided at the function.

Mr. Mott senior was heartily congratulated by his many friends and in proposing the principal toast, the Rev. E. N. McKie B.A. paid an eloquent tribute to the personal splendid qualities of an old and valued friend.

Mr. McKie said he counted it a great pleasure and privilege to be invited to the gathering and felt honoured by a long friendship with Mr. Mott. On being asked to propose the health of their respected father, the speaker referred to the unique occasion, and tendered the congratulations of all present and the wide circle of friends in New England, Victoria and Queensland. He expressed the wish that in spite of Mr. Mott's great age (88 years) he might have many happy returns of the day and enjoy health and happiness in them all.

Through the years the speaker had gleaned a few details of Mr. Mott's life history and he hoped he would be forgiven for telling a little of days beyond recall. Allusion was made to the centenary of South Australia and the foundation day, 28th December 1836. Those present might not gather around the gnarled Proclamation Tree at Adelaide, but it was worth while recalling the fact that Mr. Mott's father came to settle in South Australia in 1838, two years after the formation. Charles Mott was born on September 11th 1848. The early days of the family were spent at Echunga.

Settling in a new land involved disabilities and difficulties not known today, but the members of the Mott family and others similarly placed were gifted with grit, courage and endurance. The asperities of life were tempered by a spirit of mutual help and a simple manner of living compounded of clear thinking and honest work. Nothing could quench the spirit of such pioneers. There were no academies for Charles Mott, but he learnt lessons which deepened his innate qualities and made him a man of unimpeachable honesty.

The discovery of gold in Victoria in the fifties, and the tales told, made some of the Echunga farmers restless, and, with others, Mr. Mott set out for the diggings at Bendigo. They delved at Fiery Creek for a time, but fickle fortune did not pour out lavish rewards, so the party decided to return home.

The wheat crop, which had been planted before the party left for the diggings, was ready for harvesting on their return. It was a golden harvest for that year. It was sold for a guinea a bushel.

Farming then was hard and difficult and the crop was cut with sickle and tied in sheaves.

Later South Australia made unique contributions to improved methods of husbandry, and the stripper and harvester, now indispensable, were derived from that state. Finding what they termed better farming land, the family moved to a property on the Finnis River near Lake Alexandrina at the mouth of the Murray. Moving sand militated against successful farming.

In 1868, after various consultations, plans were laid, household goods assembled, wagons loaded and a party set out for the southwest of Victoria to settle at Hamilton.

In hours of a reminiscent spirit Mr. Mott could tell of the labours and almost heartbreaking difficulties encountered in the trek to the new home in what Sir Thomas Mitchell called Australia Felix.

Mr. Mott had been to the Brisbane show in 1936 with his son Colin and, on the highway, he was alarmed to see automobiles register 70 miles per hour at places. No such acceleration was possible on the road to Hamilton in 1868; the unmade roads in a wet season, the hopeless boggy plains and morasses to be crossed, the dismantling of the bullock wagon and the breakages prevented anything but a snail's pace till firmer ground was reached.

Here Mr. Mott, ever versatile, qualified as a bullock driver and found how necessity prompts invention and sharpens foresight.

After some years at Hamilton the opportunity of acquiring wheat land, which was profitable, in the Wimmera led to the next move.

Away back in those pioneering days there began the acquaintance, followed by the formation of that happy alliance, the foundation of a life-long source of domestic peace, loyal help and inspiration in his marriage with Miss Margaret McDonald.

As his life partner, and mother of his family. she left with her passing in January 1932, an influence which bound the sons and daughters together, and today a loving tribute was paid to her revered memory and gracious life.

With the restless spirit of the pioneer, Charles Mott looked for opportunities and so, in 1878, mounted on a trusty horse and travelling light, he rode hundreds of miles north of the Wimmera, crossed the Murray, made for Bourke on the Darling River and pushed on to Paroo.

At the time there was a distressing drought, and out on the Paroo, which he reached, food was scarce and flour was as valuable as gold dust. At Davis' Inn and Store at Kerribree he was able, by dint of hard persuasion, to purchase four pounds of flour instead of the usual two pounds allowed to travellers. Davis relented when he learnt that Mott's horse had brought him over 1,100 miles. After many adventures he reached his starting point safely and reported unfavourably.

The Paroo left its impression and warning, so it was decided to find scope in the Darling Downs in Queensland. Here some members of the family remained permanently. William Mott took up land in the Dalby district and another brother settled in North Queensland.

Charles Mott decided to return to New South Wales and to tell graphically of the journey from Jendaryan to the Warialda district. He consolidated a property which he called "Rockwell" near Gunjerwarildi.

Town dwellers of today don't fully realise what taking up land fully meant when the rail head was a hundred miles or more away and the wool clip had to go forward by wool teams.

Passing years brought their reward for all the work. A drought in 1898 made Mr. Mott seek relief in a New England property and his friends could scarcely refrain from expressing their sorrow at his folly.

After negotiations he bought "Springmount" between Armidale and Guyra. He made this his home in 1898 and resided there till he sold out and retired to Armidale in 1926. While at "Springmount" he purchased "Ben Lomond Station" which he later sold, and also "Glendon" near Glen Innes.

In 1914. while still at "Springmount", the Great War broke out and, whilst proud to think his four sons had joined the colours in the defence of the Empire, it embarrassed the effective working of his properties and gave many years of anxiety till the war was over and his boys were safe home again.

In 1926, having seen his sons settled on properties of their own, he sold "Springmount" and sought retirement at Armidale, the well earned rest to which his long and active life entitled him.

His qualities command the respect of all who have known him; his experience of life's hardships, privations and dangers, during pioneering, has given him knowledge of human nature and the key to the understanding of his fellow men. All near and far wish him the best while life's golden cord holds.

A member of the House of Representatives, D.H. Drummond, wrote about the founding of the University of New England in *A University Is Born*. His book tells how Charles helped an appeal for money to found a college.

I doubt if anyone ever turned an eye so blind to adverse circumstances as that group of men and women who decided they would work for a northern university.

Most of New South Wales was experiencing one of the worst depressions in history during the 1930s. The college venture was plagued by crisis after crisis and money was hard to raise. A move towards success came with a cheque for 1,800 pounds from Charles and a promise of any balance needed to reach the total.

The name of Charles Mott will always be held in affectionate remembrance - Citizen of three states, pioneer settler, grazier and nature's gentleman, lacking many opportunities of education himself, he like many men of Scottish descent, valued education for its own sake. At a critical moment in the life of the movement, his heart and his purse were placed at the disposal of the appeal, and the manner of his giving rather than his generous gift will long be remembered by those who received his backing and encouragement. Though gathered to his fathers, he is I am sure with us today in spirit and his example will long endure.

Children of Margaret and Charles :-

1. <i>William Joseph Mott</i>	Born 15-10-1877	Died 17-11-1963	Biographies 5147
2. <i>Sydney Victor Mott</i>	Born 14-4-1879	Died 26-3-1967	Biographies 5148
3. <i>James Arthur Mott</i>	Born 30-8-1881	Died 20-12-1966	Biographies 5149
4. <i>Leonard Maxwell Mott</i>	Born..3-8-1883	Died 13-11-1964	Biographies 5150
5. <i>Adelaide Margretta Mott</i>	Born 19-11-1885	Died 10-4-1972	Biographies 5151
6. <i>Melbourne Charles Gwydir Mott</i>	Born 18-10-1887	Died 20-8-1974	Biographies 5152
7. <i>Harold Angus Edmund Mott</i>	Born 14-1-1890	Died 24-8-1960	Biographies 5153
8. <i>Florence Ivy Pearl Mott</i>	Born 29-6-1892	Died 16-2-1982	Biographies 5154
9. <i>Colin Douglas Mott</i>	Born 16-10-1895	Died 10-6-1961	Biographies 5155

- SOURCE : This biography was from page 113 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 learn more about your family – and about privacy and copyright.