

Rachel Annie FORSYTH, nee McDONALD 28-11-1885 to 9-11-1941 & **David FORSYTH**

Biography as published in 1985 & 1995

Rachel Annie was the second child, second daughter of Donald William and Christina McDonald and was born at Carchap. Four of her first cousins were also born in 1885: Rachel Tucker in South Australia, Adelaide Mott in New South Wales and Beatrice Louisa McDonald and Flora Raggatt, both at Carchap. Her grandparents were Rachel and Ewen McDonald and great-grandparents were Christina and Donald McLean.

That year General Gordon was killed at Khartoum, and the French scientist Louis Pasteur found a cure for rabies. Two major events occurred in the history of Western Australia: The Durack family reached the Ord River after an overland journey from Queensland lasting two years and four months, and gold was discovered in the Kimberley region.

Annie attended Carchap State School with her sister Tean and after obtaining her merit certificate helped to work the family farm. On September 4, 1912 Annie was married to David Forsyth by the Reverend Thomas Gray at the Presbyterian manse, Horsham. Witnesses were Donald William McDonald and Christina Margaret McDonald. David was born at Noradjuha on December 18, 1884 and was the son of Joseph and Elizabeth Forsyth, nee McCrae, farmers of Noradjuha. Joseph had first settled at Kirkstall near Victoria's south coast. In 1915 David's sister Edith married Annie's cousin, C. W. S. McDonald of Noradjuha.

Dave and Annie worked their own farm at Noradjuha, but by 1925, when eight children had been born to them, including six boys, they realised that settlement in Victoria offered little future. They decided to sell their 600-acre farm and move to Western Australia. From Thomas Potts, Dave bought a 2,000 acre property, *Marple Farm*, six miles south of Kellerberrin. When the family, aged from 12 years to three months, left for the West, Annie's brother Len and Dave's brother Jim used their cars to drive them all to Horsham railway station to catch the *Overland* to Adelaide. There they embarked in the steamship *Karaola*, bound for Fremantle, and thence by train to Kellerberrin. Two more children were born in Western Australia and the family was complete -- three daughters, seven sons.

During the depression of the 1930s, 700 acres of neighbouring land had to be sold and the Forsyth family bought it for a nominal sum. It was light virgin ground, overrun by rabbits which Dave and his boys trapped and sold for meat and skins. Then they ripped the burrows and ploughed the land. It grew an outstanding wheat crop. Later in the 1930s another 1,800 adjoining acres were purchased and by World War Two the property had been doubled in size.

In 1936. Annie, Dave and sixteen-year-old Muriel made a trip in the *Duntroon* to Brisbane and return. Two days in Port Melbourne enabled them to contact Victorian relatives.

Five sons joined the armed force during World War Two, and all returned home. Annie died in 1941, a few weeks before her fifty-sixth birthday, and is buried at Kellerberrin. During the war Dave maintained the property, helped by his youngest sons Roy and Victor and daughters Muriel and Ella. Dave continued farming until his sudden death in 1948 at the age of 64 years. He is buried at Kellerberrin. By this time each of his sons had a farm of his own, achieved by constant hard work and careful management. Victor Forsyth now owns the original *Marple Farm*. Annie's death was reported in a Western Australian newspaper.

The death occurred at Rivervale on Sunday last of a well known and well beloved resident of the district, in the person of Mrs. D. Forsyth, at the age of 57 years.

Though born in Victoria, Mrs. Forsyth came to Western Australia in 1925 and with her husband settled at South Kellerberrin, where their farm is now situated.

The late Mrs. Forsyth was closely associated with the activities of the Country Women's Association, and the various patriotic movements of the town and district, and was also a devoted worker in the cause of the Presbyterian Church.

An indication of the high esteem in which the family is held was given at the funeral, at Kellerberrin on Tuesday, when the Presbyterian Church was filled at a service conducted by Mr. Heggte, who also officiated during the last sad rites at the graveside.

The beautifully polished casket was borne to the grave by Messrs. K. McNeil, H. Gardner, R. Gibbs and H. Jones, whilst the pall-bearers were Messrs G. I. Ogilvie, L. Cameron, H. Turner, L. A. White, O. C. Greenwood and Rev. N. Hicks.

Members of the Country Women's Association formed a guard of honour and followed the cortege to the graveside.

Mrs. Forsyth leaves a sorrowing husband, seven sons and three daughters to mourn the loss of a devoted Wife and Mother.

A newspaper obituary reported Dave's sudden death.

The sudden death of Mr. Dave Forsyth, at Kellerberrin on Wednesday, came as a great shock to the town and district. He had been in town the previous day in apparent good health, so that his untimely passing was unexpected. The deceased gentleman collapsed at his home and died at the E.D.M. Hospital.

Coming from the Wimmera district in Victoria in 1925 Mr. Forsyth, with his wife and family, took up farming a few miles south of Kellerberrin, and has been a resident here ever since, having been predeceased by his wife, who passed on to higher service in November 1941.

Well known as a hard worker, Dave Forsyth made a success of his farming activities, and on the return of five of his sons from service with the armed forces, he retired from active participation on the farm to make way for his boys, assisting four of them to become established on farms of their own.

Although he never sought the limelight of leadership in the various district organisations, Mr. Forsyth was at all times a generous financial supporter to appeals for assistance by any worthy cause. He maintained a keen interest in all spheres of district activity.

The Forsyth family in their long residence here have gained the respect of the whole district, and we join in expressing sympathy to the bereaved sons and daughters.

The funeral will take place at 2.30 p.m. today (Friday) when the cortege will leave the Kellerberrin Presbyterian Church.

- SOURCE : This biography was from page 138 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.