

## Mary Elizabeth TAPLIN, nee RAGGATT 4-6-1815 to 28-1-1951 & Benjamin Diederich TAPLIN

Biography as published in 1985 & 1995

Mary Elizabeth, the eldest child of Mary and Bill Raggatt, was born in a tent on the police paddock at Horsham, Victoria. Her first cousin Lionel Tucker was born in January the same year. Her grandparents were Rachel and Ewen McDonald and great-grandparents were Christina and Donald McLean.

This was the year in which Ernest Giles led a successful expedition from the Overland Telegraph line through to Perth.

Mary, known as Tot, attended the Carchap State School No. 2816 and then helped her mother with the growing family. Before her marriage Tot spent some years on the domestic staff of St Mary's Station, west of Mt Arapiles. This was owned by Thomas Philip. Tot married Benjamin Diederich Taplin at Horsham. He was the son of Benjamin Wiltshire and Jenny Wilhelmina Margaret Taplin and was born at Point McLeay, Lake Alexandrina, South Australia, on December 15, 1871.

The name Taplin first appears in the Wimmera Shire rate book in 1876 with the entry: TAPLIN Ben. W. 320 acres at Tooan. Ben W, Taplin had been a lighthouse keeper and Benjamin Diederich was a little boy of 5 years when his parents moved to Victoria. Benjamin Diederich wore a moustache and was known as Diddy. He and his wife lived on a small farm at Tooan; this might have been part of his father's original selection. They kept poultry, and Diddy share-farmed for neighbours. Tot loved animals, grew fruit in the orchard, and beautiful flowers and vegetables in her garden. There were no children.

Later in life Diddy suffered from heart trouble and attended Dr Roy Felstead in Horsham for treatment. He died suddenly on the night of February 12, 1932. Stan Hammond of Noradjuha remembers this night vividly. The Taplins were their neighbours and lived about a mile away, across a creek. That night Tot, carrying a lantern, ran across the paddock to Hammonds for help. Stan was only a young lad and it was his first experience of death.

Hammonds helped Tot prepare her property for sale. It was bought by a Mr. Schunke and is now owned by Bob Mewett.

Diddy is buried in Noradjuha cemetery and his headstone reads: *'In memory of my beloved husband, Benjamin D. Taplin, born 15th December 1871 - died 12th February 1932.'* Cemetery records show that his name was Benjamin Diederich George Wiltshire Taplin. His obituary appeared in the *Horsham Times* on February 16, 1932.

*The sudden death occurred at his home at Noradjuha on Saturday of a well known farmer, Mr. Benjamin D. Taplin, aged 60. Some time ago he was treated at the Horsham Base Hospital and appeared to be progressing well. On Friday he was seized with a fatal illness. He leaves a sorrowing widow but no family.*

*The funeral took place at the Noradjuha Cemetery on Sunday afternoon and was well attended by a large circle of friends. The burial service was read by the Rev. C. Stroud, of Noradjuha, and the coffin bearers were Messrs. A. Stehn, H. Stehn, M. G. Grant, A. Jennings, A. Raggatt, and E. A. Raggatt. The funeral arrangements were carried out by E. H. Bye of Horsham.*

Tot's sister Norma said in 1974 the family had believed Diddy's father to have been a missionary to Aborigines in South Australia. The South Australian Archives provided an obituary.

*TAPLIN — On the 24th June 1879 at Point Macleay, suddenly, the Rev. Geo. Taplin, Missionary to the aborigines, aged 47.*

*Death of the Rev. George Taplin — Mr. C. N. Collison, Secretary to the Aborigines' Friends' Association, received a telegram on Tuesday from Milang, stating that the Rev. G. Taplin, Superintendent of the Native Mission Station at Point Macleay, had died suddenly that morning. The deceased gentleman, who a few weeks ago completed his twentieth year of service at the station, was peculiarly well qualified for the position he so long occupied. He was General Superintendent and preacher at the institution, and in the early days he was also the sole teacher. He had a good knowledge of medicine and surgery, and acted as doctor, not only to the natives, but to the white people in the neighbourhood. He was also a good mechanic and was thoroughly able to supervise all the mechanical parts of the mission farm. As a self-taught philologist he achieved some eminence, his papers on philology and ethnology having been read before and published by the learned Societies of London. His latest work, entitled "Narrinyerie," dealing with the language of the native tribes of the colony, is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of a fast-decaying race. Some years ago he was ordained as a minister, but was not connected with any denomination. He was a most energetic man, and loved the work to which he had devoted so many years of his life. It is supposed that the cause of his death was heart disease. He has left a widow and a number of children. One of his sons is Superintendent of the farm portion of the institution. On Tuesday afternoon the Rev. F. W. Cox proceeded to Point Macleay to attend to the burial of the deceased and make arrangements for the temporary management of the station.*

Diddy's death certificate was then found. showing his father's name as Benjamin, occupation lighthouse keeper. It was later learned that Benjamin was a brother of the Reverend George Taplin. The missionary was Diddy's uncle. A Melbourne bookseller's catalogue of 1975 listed George Taplin's book.

*TAPLIN G.: Grammar of the Narrinyeri tribe of Aborigines. Adelaide, 1878. Ferguson 16709. Modern half calf, gilt. E.M. Curr': copy, with his signature on title-page. \$90.00.*

After selling the farm, Tot retired to Horsham to live with her sister Jessie and husband Alec Lampard. When Jessie died in 1952, Tot lived with her sister Norma in the family home in Baillie Street. Before her death, Tot was cared for at the Lutheran Rest Home in Horsham. She died on January 28, 1957, aged 81 years and was buried in Noradjuha cemetery. There is no headstone.

- SOURCE : This biography was from page 175 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](http://www.christinaanddonaldmclean.com) or Strathalbyn Museum phone 08 8536 2656 to discover more about your family –and about privacy and copyright.