

Angus McDONALD 11-6-1865 to 15-4-1937 & Flora McArthur McDONALD, nee STEVENSON

Biography as published in 1985 & 1995

Angus McDonald was the ninth child and fifth son of Ewen and Rachel McDonald, and was born at 11 a.m. on Sunday, June 11, 1865 at his parents' home *Balmarino*, Finniss River, South Australia. His grandparents were Christina and Donald McLean.

In England that year, William Booth founded the Salvation Army. In the United States the Civil War ended and President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. In New Zealand the Maori War ended, and the capital of the country was changed from Auckland to Wellington. In Australia the writer Mary Gilmore was born and landscape painter Louis Buvelot arrived in Melbourne.

Angus moved with his family to Victoria just before his tenth birthday. The Noradjuha school register shows that he and his sister Rachel Jane were enrolled at the newly-opened school in the second half of 1878. Angus worked on the family farm and became a bullock driver, eventually having a team of his own with which he did general carting in the Noradjuha-Carchap area. Being only a lad of 9 years when the family arrived at Noradjuha in 1874, he did not own land, but the Arapiles Shire rate book of 1895 shows that he was leasing allotment 75 Parish of Carchap, an area of 82 acres 3 roods 9 perches with fencing. His brother Charles purchased this allotment from the Crown on September 26, 1903. Today it is owned by Donald Arthur Hobbs.

While on a visit to his sister Margaret Mott at Warialda, New South Wales, Angus met his future wife Flora McArthur Stevenson. On March 9, 1898, at *Allandale*, Gunjerwarildi, near Warialda, Angus was married to Flora according to the rites of the Wesleyan church. Flora was the daughter of Allan and Margaret Stevenson, nee McArthur, of *Allandale* and was born about 1862 in Toowoomba, Queensland. Flora's father Allan was born in Scotland, the son of William Stevenson, cotton spinner, and his wife Jane Love. Allan and his wife Margaret were married in Glasgow. He died in August 1890 after falling from a horse. Allan was 64 years old and had lived in New South Wales for twenty-eight years. He was buried at Warialda cemetery. His surviving children at that date were Jessie, aged 38; Flora, 28; Colin Robert Alexander, 23; and William Elder.

Angus and Flora settled on a sheep grazing property near Longreach Queensland. He did well with his sheep and at the Longreach show in 1909 he was presented with a silver tray as trophy for 'champion ewe, bred by Mr A. McDonald'.

Angus and Flo had one son, Ewen Angus Stevenson McDonald, born at Longreach in May 1903. Young Ewen was only a 10-year-old schoolboy when he died on September 13, 1913 at Longreach. He had been ill for five months with rheumatic endocarditis, and died of a pulmonary embolism. Ewen was buried in the Presbyterian section of Longreach cemetery, his grave enclosed by an iron railing. A marble column surmounted by an angel was placed as the headstone.

Angus took Flora on an extended holiday. During this time his brother Alexander John, 'Big Jack', and his daughter Jean stayed at *Ewendale* as caretakers. On her return the grief-stricken Flora took up permanent residence in Longreach, stating she would never leave her son's grave. She and Angus parted. Four years later she wrote to her bereaved sister-in-law Flora McDonald of Mockinya. She had just heard of the death of Flora and Joseph's son, Gordon, on active service in France.

Longreach 15-7-1917.

My dear Flo. I only heard yesterday of your sad loss, no one but those who have lost loved ones can know how hard it is. But you have the comfort that your dear boy died a man doing what he could for us all. When time

eases your sore hearts you may get to feel that it is all for the best. Your dear one may have been taken away from evil as I often think of my own dear little boy. Life is too sad to wish our loved ones to have any of the sorrow which has fallen on ourselves. I don't know what to say. So will say goodbye. Love to all your circle from, Your sincere sister, Flo.

Angus returned to the farm alone and a glimpse of his life in the years following the death of Ewen survives in the fragments of two letters he wrote to his nephew Len McDonald of Noradjuha. One letter is undated but refers to Lennie's father, D. W., so it was before D.W.'s, death in May 1915.

We have a little grass yet. And nearly all the sheep we have are fat. Tell your Dad that I got eighteen pence halfpenny and 16¹/₄ per pound for our wool in Sydney. It was scoured at Barcaldine. I have another shearing next month. There are only a few so I will shear them myself. So if you come over I will give you a job rouseabouting. Even the trees are dying. Along the creek there is what we called "coolaba", they are just like the box trees over with you and they are dying. I have to cart water for the sheep from town. It keeps me going. I have to feed the horses and chaff is ten guineas per ton cask. Wheat seven shillings per bushel. Can you send me some? I got a lot of sand in one lot I got. So things are only middling here. But it is to be hoped that we will have a good rain before long and a few good years. Butter is 2/2 a pound here. Ask your mother if she remembers the time I did her for the butter when I was going down the river.

A second letter is written on notepaper with a printed heading 'Ewendale — Ilfracombe. Telephonic communication with Ilfracombe — Telephone No. 2'. It is dated October 29, 1917.

My dear Lennie. I suppose I must bog in and answer your letter or I will be in your black book. The first thing you ask is how I am getting on. Well I am battling on very well. I have had a bad attack of rheumatics. But I am glad to say I am better though it has left my arms and hands very stiff. I have sacked my manager a few weeks ago. So I am here all alone. So I am cook, boundry rider, cowboy, manager and several other things all in one. I thought I was doing the man I had on a good turn. He was married and had three children. Of course I had to find them in tucker So goodbye Len good luck. I hope to see you before very long. Give my love to all at home. Your sincere Uncle Angus McDonald. P.S. Just had 5 inches rain. Looks like more. P.S. Contractors charge £3-16-0 per hundred for shearing. They find everything except bales and twine. Goodbye A. McD.

Eventually Angus sold *Ewendale* and bought a house in the Brisbane suburb of Albion Heights near his niece Dell Hawken and family. Over the next fifteen years Angus became the link between his widely-scattered relations, taking news from one family to the next. He spent the summer motoring south through New South Wales to Victoria and South Australia, staying with relatives en route. For quite a few years he spent part of the winter around Cairns in northern Queensland. In Adelaide he stayed at the Criterion Hotel in King William Street. At one time he brought his niece Jean Dix from Adelaide to Horsham to stay with his sister Flora. For a couple of years Flora's daughter Ollie housekept for Angus in Brisbane and did the round of relatives with him. On another occasion his sister Jenny Donaldson accompanied him to Horsham.

In the early 1920s he bought a farm close to the small western Victorian township of Harrow. His nephew Ted McDonald managed it for him until it was sold several years later. In that district Angus is still remembered as A. Q. McDonald, short for Queensland McDonald. It was at this time, just after World War One, that he presented a gold watch to each of the returned soldiers from the Nurrabiel district in the Wimmera, just one example of the generous gifts he bestowed during his lifetime. His great niece Joy Arden, nee Hawken, remembered him.

I remember Angus McDonald. He was tall and upright with thick iron-grey hair and we called him Uncle Angus although he was our great-uncle. He loved sport and was always to be seen at Test matches and football matches. He had especially made by a tailor a splendid white waistcoat with secret pockets and he would wear this to the races. It would be a smart one to pick his pockets. He had a Whippet named Biddy and she had two or three pups which he tried out greyhound racing. I was nominated to travel in the dicky seat of his Chrysler sports car to hold on to them when he went to meets.

Those days it was live-hare coursing and at one time he was looking after some hares at his home. One had some eye trouble and while it was getting some attention it got away, out on to the tramline. It could see a little bit and was making some head-way down the centre of the track, Uncle Angus legging it along behind and a tram keeping pace. with the driver enthusiastically clanging the bell. I was up with them too, but on the footpath. Uncle Angus caught the hare and I'm glad to say he became quite attached to it and kept it as a pet.

Angus was a great favourite with his nieces and nephews of all generations. He was gentle and kind with a marvellous sense of humour. He spoke with a light husky voice, the legacy of riding into a clothes line in the dark. One of his hobbies was photography and he owned an expensive folding camera. Many of his photographs of relatives, their children and their homes still exist. Cars were another source of pride and interest, and he changed his models fairly regularly, the Dodge being a favourite. On his trips south through New South Wales and Victoria, Angus had numerous adventures. One still remembered concerns an incident on a lonely country road when he was flagged down by a man carrying a swag. As he slowed the car about five of the swaggie's mates emerged from the scrub and advanced towards him. Fortunately for Angus they had appeared too soon, the engine was still running and he was able to speed away. After that he always carried a stout stick on the front seat for protection.

Angus stayed many weeks each year at the home of his nephew Len Mott at Llangothlin, New South Wales, and it was here that he came to live towards the end of his life. In the 1930s he had trouble with his right ankle and the illness was diagnosed as tuberculosis. His right leg was amputated below the knee and Angus was fitted with an artificial limb. He amused and startled many of the young fry with twigs of green leaves growing from his wooden leg and sprouting over the top of his sock. By 1937 tuberculosis had also affected his right knee and Angus became a patient at the Scottish Private Hospital, Cooper Street, Paddington, Sydney. Here he died on April 15, aged 72 years. He was cremated at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium, Lane Cove, Sydney.

Two months later the brother closest to Angus in age, Jack, died at Geelong, Victoria. In September of the same year their brother-in-law Charles Mott died at Armidale, New South Wales. Later the Hawken family heard that four members of a family that previously lived in Angus's Brisbane house had also died from tuberculosis.

Warialda cemetery records show that Flora McArthur McDonald, nee Stevenson, was buried on July 24, 1955, aged 94 years.

Child of Angus and Flora :-

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| 1. Ewen Angus Stevenson McDonald | Born May 1903 | Died 13-9-1913 |
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- SOURCE : This biography was from page 215 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.