

# Rachel HORNBY, nee McLEAN & William Prescott HORNBY

Biography as published in 1995

**RACHEL McLEAN** born 21/3/1863 at "Meadow Bank", Strathalbyn, the 9th child of Allan and Catherine (nee Dawson) McLean.

Parents : Catherine (nee Dawson) & Allan McLean

Grandparents : Jane (nee Hamilton) & James Dawson and Christina (nee McPhee) and Donald McLean.

After the Allan family removed to the mid-north in 1878 Rachel met William Prescott Hornby who was working at the Hotel at Collinsfield.

**MARRIAGE:** said to be against the wishes of Allan and his wife, took place on 19/4/1881 at Red Hill, in the Pt Broughton - Crystal Brook area, 106 miles north of Adelaide. Rachel was aged 18 and Bill as her husband was called, was 22. He was born sea aboard the "Mary Elizabeth" on 17/12/1858, 14 days out from England on the way to South Australia. He was the eldest son and named after his father. He was completely uneducated and was working at the age of 11 on the Dry Creek railway line for one shilling and sixpence (15 cents) a day. (no doubt Allan's objection to the marriage was due to Bill's lack of schooling, and there was a break with the family except for Rachel's sister Mary, Mrs Nutt of Orroroo). Bill worked for some years on northern sheep stations and was then at Collinsfield, then owned by Collins and later by Coffeys. At that time he and Rachel lived nearby.

In 1884 they obtained their own land in the Pt Broughton district, 107 miles north and west of Adelaide. They were one and a half miles N.E. of the town on the northern side of the Port Pirie Road and here they remained until old age. Their first home was a dug-out cellar type but it flooded so they built 4 rooms of "pug and pine" with white washed super bag ceilings. More lean-to rooms of galvanised iron were added as the family increased. Cooking was by wood stove and laundering was done out of doors under a spreading pepper tree until a wash house was built and to this a car shed was joined in later years.

More blocks of land were bought as they could afford them until they owned approximately 1000 acres. Finance came from cropping and farm produce. They sold eggs and butter to the town shops and residents, and they also had a milk round, At one stage wheat sold at one shilling and ninepence (18 cents) per bushell and in 1914 they reaped only 49 bags and had to request a bank loan to keep going but in 1915 hard work was rewarded with 1000 bags and so they were out of debt.

Rachel's last surviving child, May Malycha, was living in November 1990 and described her mother as good, kindly, reliable and a gentle loving mother, an out-going country woman who managed the family business well. She was above average height with nicely rounded features and wore long black dresses always. She gave birth to all her eleven children at home with the aid of a midwife, Mrs Watson, and in later years was often herself called on for the same service.

Bill was something of a character. Short in stature, of wiry build, with a bushy beard and smoked a foul smelling pipe. He liked the odd drink if Rachel gave him the money. He doubled the price he needed so he could have 4 drinks instead of 2. The eleven children were 7 daughters and 4 sons and only Arthur did not marry and died at the age of 45.

All the children attended Pt Broughton School, starting at 9 years and leaving at 13 or 14. In due course the sons went their own way, though working at home in their teen years, except for Gordon who continued to work with his father and eventually acquired that land and farmed about 600 acres.

Water was a problem early on and the men of the family would take a tank on a wagon pulled by three horses up over the Collingsfield Gap to Red Hill to buy water which was 9 pence (9 cents) a barrel at one time. Returning up the eastern side of the Gap, once, heavy rain fell as they neared the top, so they decided to let the water go as there was no real road and the going was not easy. As they neared home the rain ceased and their own place was bone dry, so they had to turn round and make a repeat journey.

Eventually the house had two underground tanks, one for home consumption and the other for stock. The water was drawn up by bucket and stored in barrels. One day Rachel walked over the cover of a tank and it gave way. She fell but being broad shouldered she was wedged. After much yelling for help she was carefully lifted out. Water in such tanks is always cold so buckets of cream were lowered to chill for butter making, salt was added and one pound pats formed for sale in exchange for meat from butcher Harry Barker and for groceries from Fraser and Gillies. Eggs were sold in the same way as they always kept hens, ducks and geese. When on rare occasions the children received spending money they were able to buy 2 buns for a penny (1 cent) or a stick of licorice for the same.

There were always cows to be milked twice a day, at one time 18, but usually 10 or 11. The children did the milk round at Pt Broughton, taking a horse and cart loaded with cans and customers were charged 2 pence (2 cents) a pint. When the round was finished, the reins were tied to the can and the horse sent home with the empty cans for Rachel to wash and prepare for next day. This was not altogether popular locally as the reliable old horse refused to move aside to allow cars to pass. Cars were then just beginning to be used as transport.

Once, May and Maggie, used sovereigns paid for accounts, to play "Knuckle bones" as they travelled home in the cart. They had no idea of the value of the coins and when they were flipped onto the road they made no attempt to recover them. Rachel took them back and made them search until they were found, every penny being needed.

In earlier years Bill worked hard. Later he made sure that his sons did the same. To augment the income he did boat work and worked at the wheat stacks. He kept up to 10 draught horses and the children had to take them to Fishermens Bay by the roadway to water which was the first to get piped water.

Maggie was the helper in the house, but May was an outside worker and drove a team. Once, when she had little brother Gordon with her and he disobeyed her order to sit still, he fell, and the plough went right over him, fortunately without causing any injury. He was so dirty that May undressed him, thoroughly shook out his clothes, redressed him and kept quiet about the incident and did not confess for many years.

Occasionally Rachel and Bill would harness up the two grey horses to the buggy, and leaving at 3 a.m. would drive to Pt Pirie with some of the children. They would travel across country and after completing their "buy up" would return home after dark and reach there after midnight.

In later years there was a car, a new (black, naturally) Model T. Ford. The story is told that one evening after a visit to the township, and maybe with one drink too many, Bill came in around the gate and could not stop at the car shed in time - and in spite of calling loudly "Whoa! Whoa!" the car went into it and straight through the other end. Maggie learnt to drive but May never did.

The race course on the Hornby property was on the swamp between the old home and son Allan's. The annual race meeting was a great day. Horse stalls were of mallee rails and Rachel and her family catered, charging two shillings (20 cents) for a dinner. Pies, pasties, sausage rolls, pudding and custard, cakes, etc. As children the family made its own amusements with highlights of days at Fishermans Bay, school and Sunday School picnics. Later there were dances and socials at Pt Broughton. Horses were tied up to pepper trees along the west side of the old hall in Mackay Street.

A newspaper cutting records that the marriage of daughter May to Jack Malchya took place in April 1931 at St. Phillip's Church and the reception for 120 persons was held in conjunction with the 50th wedding celebration of

Rachel and William Prescott Hornby, at the residence of Allan and Tot Hornby, the verandahs protected by hessian awnings being the main venue. Jack, a brother, made the wedding cakes as he was working for Pulford's, the town bakers, at the time.

Rachel was fond of photographs and covered the house walls with them, some being of very large size so that one could say she still had her family around her when all had gone to homes of their own.

For many years she donated Bibles to the Methodist Sunday School as the Anglican's did not have a Sunday School. Bill called his children "bloody Wesleyan buggers" as they cut through the paddocks on Sundays. Bill was Catholic, Rachel Methodist, so naturally they married in the Anglican Church. Stained glass windows at St. Phillip's were donated by Rachel. The story is told that one day when the vicar called on a pastoral visit Bill called out loudly "who the hell is that old bugger out there" while the family tried to make him hush up.

In 1936 floodwaters rushed through the old house, damaging furniture and floor covering (linoleums) so they shifted to a small house at Pt Broughton where Maggie next door, and other family members were very supportive. In 1946 when W.W.2 was over, the owner Henry Summerton needed this house in Mackay St. for his son Claude so Bill and Rachel lived until their deaths with various family members. In these last years Bill was a contrary old man - deaf, swore profusely, talked loudly and was rather bad tempered - quite a handful in fact.

Their Diamond Wedding was held at the Institute on 19/4/1941 with a vast gathering of family. A newspaper cutting tells of the various speakers, the musical entertainment and that they had spent 57 years at Port Broughton. Bill and Rachel had raised 1000 pounds (\$2000) for war charities during the 1914-18 war.

#### DEATHS:

William Prescott Hornby on 4/5/1948 in his 90th year at the Red Hill home of his daughter May Malchya.  
Rachel died at the residence of daughter Beattie Gransden at Port Pirie on 6/8/1949 aged 86 years.  
Both were interred at Port Broughton.

The Hornby farms there have stayed within the family as the land is now owned by great grandson Allan Aitchison.

(Note: We are indebted to another great grandchild, Gloria Edwards, nee Hornby, for this delightful account of her pioneer family. The compiler (E.M.S.) has shortened it a little to use information of family members in their own sections.)

#### CHILDREN

1. Allan William Hornby born 1882 at Pt Broughton. (Registration not found) Married: Martha (Tot) Isabella McDonald of Wallaroo. They had 7 children – Leslie, Percival (Pud), Harold (Mally), Donald, Edna, Allan & Frank. Allan obtained one block of land near the family home then gradually purchased "Millar Blocks" of 40 - 60 acres until his land eventually totalled approximately 2000 acres. He built his home closer to the swamps north east of the old home - towards Fishermans Bay. Deaths: Allan died 10/12/1970. Tot died 31/12/1962, buried at Pt Broughton.
2. Albert John (Jack) Hornby born 2/2/1885 at Pt Broughton. Residence: Port Broughton. MARRIED: Jessie Elizabeth Norris (b. 17/3/1886) of Pt Pirie. They had 3 children – Walter, Rachel & Beryl. 'Jack' was a kindly, loved man. His various occupations were road building, baking, wheat lumper and labourer (until he was quite a good age). He worked at stacks and on ships lumping wheat and in latter years, he, with his nephew "Pud" were a good team. They were clever at dropping bags from the shoulder into the exact right position, without having to use a bag hook to straighten them. They used slides and elevators to build the stacks and to load railway trucks for transporting to ketches tied up at the jetty. They also went out on windjammers anchored at the light (deep water). Walking on bagged wheat all day was very leg tiring as well as hard and heavy on the shoulders. Jack also worked at the Port Broughton Fibre Works around 1912. He and his family lived on a block to the east of his parents, with about 100 acres (land on

both sides of the Pt Pirie road). In his old age he lived in Pt Broughton and worked at the Hotel where he was widely and affectionately known as "Linc". DEATHS: Jessie died on 3/1/1958 at Pt Broughton. Jack died on 26/10/1977 also at Pt Broughton. Both interred at Pt Broughton.

3. Arthur James Hornby born 13/2/1887 at Port Broughton. Unmarried. He was unable to work and "had many problems". His mother Rachel's wish was that he should predecease her, which he did in 1932 aged 45.
4. Rachel Catherine Beatrice 'Beattie' Hornby born 4/8/1889 at Pt Broughton, Married: at Pt Broughton, Edward (Ted) Richard Dawson Gransden. Ted was born 2/7/1884 at Keilli. Rachel & Ted had 6 children – William, Russell, Victor, Allan, John (Jack) & Molly. Residence: Pt Pirie, S.A. Beattie was a gentle lady - quiet nature, hard working and loved her family. In her latter years she was unfortunate to be affected by a stroke. However her sense of humour was still with her. Ted died 10/4/1950 and Beattie died 15/8/1975. Both interred at Pt Pirie.
5. Isabella (Belle) Winniefred Hornby born 3/8/1892 at Port Broughton. Married: Sydney Leonard Stringer, born 1892. They had 8 children - Gordon, Marjorie, Linda, Ruth, Ines, Verna, Sydney & Dorothy. Residence: They lived on the West Coast at Arno Bay, S.A. Belle died in 1941 and Sydney died 1961.
6. Ethel Mabel Hornby born 5/10/1894, at Pt Broughton. Married: Clement James Westlake, b. 1894. They had one child – Victor. Residences: Booborowie and later Port Broughton. S.A. Clement died 19/5/1969 and Ethel died a few months later in 27/9/1969. Both interred at Clare, S.A.
7. Winifred (Winnie) Hornby born 7/3/1896 at Port Broughton. Married: Frank Gray Allchurch (b. 1896) They had 4 children – Gladys, Clifford, Rachel & Henry. Residence: Adelaide. Winnie died 1927 and Frank died many years later in 1964.
8. Doris (Ivy) Hornby Hornby: born 28/2/1899 at Port Broughton. Married: Oswald Isaac (Jack) Wahlheim (b. 18/5/1891). They had 3 children – Doris, Bernadine & Gwenyth. Jack's occupation was a building contractor. Residence: Taillem Bend, S A. Deaths: Jack died 7/9/1957 and Ivy died 19/7/1978. Both interred at Dudley Park, S.A.
9. Pretoria (May) Hornby born 12/7/1900, Port Broughton Married: John (Jack) Malycha at St. Phillips, Pt Broughton. They had 3 children – Henry, Gerald & John. Residence: Redhill, S.A. May was a hard worker, friendly, good sense of humour. keen football supporter and fund raiser. It was May, whose memories were recorded at the beginning of Rachel's section. Deaths: May died 1992. Jack died 1970. Both interred at Redhill, S.A.
10. Margaret (Maggie) Guinn Hornby b. 11/8/1904 at Port Broughton. Married: Thomas Joseph Hickey (b. 2/10/1910) They had 5 children – Margaret, Rachel, Ian, Dennis & Kathleen. Residence: Port Broughton, S.A. Maggie was a kind woman, a hard worker and supported her parents well in their old age. Thomas died on 7/4/1973 and Maggie died 9/4/1982.
11. Gordon Frederick George Hornby born 19/4/1906 at Port Broughton.. Married twice. 1st Marriage to Laura Waters (b. 13/12/1909). Gordon & Laura had 3 children – William, Gwenyth & Ruth. Gordon, the youngest son, owned and worked his farm which was situated next to the original homestead. It was closer to Pt Broughton (on the Pt Pirie road) which meant all Hornby lands were together. Gordon with his wife Laura worked hard and milked many cows as well as farming. Laura died on 10/5/1960. 2nd Marriage to Clarice Morse (b. 9/5/1908). Gordon stayed on the farm until his death on 19/7/1981. Clarice died a few months later on 15/12/1981.

- SOURCE : This biography is an extract from "The History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants" which was published in 1995 – page 101 to 117.
- 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.