

## Donald William McDONALD 6-3-1853 to 5-5-1915 & Christina McDONALD, nee CAMERON

Biography as published in 1985 & 1995

Donald William was the fourth child and first son of Ewen and Rachel McDonald, and was born at their home at Lower Finniss. His grandparents were Christina and Donald McLean.

In overseas events Britain stopped the transportation of convicts to Tasmania, Verdi's opera *La Traviata* was presented, and Cecil Rhodes was born. In Australia the first river steamer, the *Mary Anne*, was built by Captain W. Randell, near Mannum on the Murray River; *The Age* newspaper started publication in Melbourne and in December the gold escort from Adelaide to the Mt Alexander. Castlemaine gold diggings in Victoria ceased operation.

He was known as William. Little is known of his schooling except for references in his father Ewen's diary for 1865. On October 17 he writes '*Mrs. went to Milang with William to school.*' William, aged 12 years, appears often in this diary; being the eldest son his responsibilities began early in life. On May 5 he accompanied his father to Adelaide where they attended a theatre. In the 1864 diary, Ewen writes on Sunday, July 31: '*William allowed his sheep all over the Calf Paddock. Beat him for it.*'

William moved to Noradjuha, Victoria, with his family when he was 21 years. On April 6, 1874 he applied for a licence for 319 acres 0 roods 5 perches in the Parish of Nurrabiel, County of Lowan. The licence was granted on August 1, 1874. The survey fee of £8 and mileage of 17/- 'had been paid by the applicant William Donald McDonald.' Improvements consisted of a post and two-rail fence of 48 chains at 21/- a chain and a log and brush fence at 5/- a chain. Timber and iron for a house had been bought, £30, and a reservoir of 1,140 yards had been dug at a cost of £20.

There were fifty chains of split stuff at 14/- a chain, 32 acres cleared at 50/- an acre £80, following of 14 acres at 20/- an acre £14. At this stage William lived on his father's selection and had not complied with land cultivation requirements, '*as the land was not suitable for cultivation*'. The land was not totally fenced, lacking 40 chains, but was shortly to be done. The occupier of adjoining land was J. Cook. A transfer of lease of Flora McDonald's land to her brother D. W. McDonald took place on November 25, 1879. For this block William paid the final instalment on August 10, 1891.

On March 11, 1880 at the Presbyterian Manse at Horsham, in the colony of Victoria. William was married by the Reverend J. Paton to Christina Cameron of Cannum, via Warracknabeal, Victoria. The witnesses were Jessie McNaughton and John Cameron. Christina was born at Hamilton, Victoria, on May 15. 1856 and was the daughter of William and Christina Cameron. nee McNaughton. She was one of a family of three girls and six boys. The Cameron name first appeared in the Wimmera Shire rate book in 1875. It lists William, Angus, Duncan and John Cameron of Cannum.

On March 17, 1879 Christina Cameron of Lake Hindmarsh applied for a licence under the Land Act 1869 for allotment 24, Parish of Nurrabiel. This allotment is described as having been forfeited by Margaret McDonald. On July 9, 1888, Christina Cameron, now Mrs. Christina McDonald, was granted lease of this block. Land adjoining was occupied by Ewen McDonald and D. W. McDonald. Improvements consisted of a post, rail and wire fence of 70 chains at 15/- a chain. A post and wire fence of 130 chains at 10/- a chain. A log fence of 12 chains at 10/- a chain.

### Cultivation

- 2nd year — 8 acres at 15/- per acre — 8 tons of hay.

- 3rd year — 5 acres at 15/- per acre — 5 tons of hay.
- 5th year - 10 acres ploughed and cultivated at 15/- per acre. Oats yielded 10 bushels per acre.
- 6th year — 20 acres at 15/- per acre. Wheat sown yielded 10 bushels an acre.

Other improvements

- 1 A house 25ft x 30ft — weatherboard £60.
- 2 A house 24ft x 30ft — wood and iron £40
- 3 A shed 40ft x 16ft — timber £20
- 4 Stock and stack yards — £10
- 5 Garden planted with trees £20
- 6 Underground tank £10

Improvements amounted to £355-15-0. The dwelling house had five rooms and had been lived in for five years. The land was not totally enclosed; some of the north fence harboured rabbits and had to be dismantled. This block was eventually purchased by Charles Stuart McDonald who finalised payment on May 13, 1898. William named his property *Blackwood*, and he and Christina always had a fine vegetable garden and orchard. At one time he had a contract to form part of a road near the Dollin Swamp in Mockinya district.

Donald William McDonald was known by the family as D. W., and also known for his loud voice. His niece Norma Raggatt remembered Uncle William as *'a fine, honest, upright man, always straight out in his dealings with people.'*

For some years before her death in 1908 his mother Rachel lived with the family at *Blackwood*. It is not known when William bought the property which he refers to as *The Valley*, in the Little Mallee area, five miles further north of the Horsham road. Much of this land still needed clearing and his 1912 diary shows how frequently he and his son Leney were camped there, cutting shoots.

In 1915, aged 62 years, William died in a Melbourne hospital after a serious illness. He is buried in Nurrabiel cemetery. The farm was carried on by his young son Len, then aged 19 years. Descendants of Christina and Edie McDonald, Mrs C. W. S. McDonald, still laugh about an incident which involved them both with a fox. While out on her horse one day, Edie spied a fox and gave chase. The animal made for *Blackwood* and to Edie's amazement seemed to disappear through the front door, into the house. Grandma McDonald, however, stoutly denied there was any fox in her home and the baffled Edie galloped off, jumping the fences in her path. Later that day, on entering her bedroom, Grandma was astounded to find it occupied — by the fox!

In the early 1920s the original *Blackwood* was sold and Christina, Tean, Polly and Len settled on the land in the Little Mallee area. This became the new *Blackwood*. Christina died in the Horsham Hospital in 1932 and is buried with her husband in Nurrabiel cemetery.

William's diary : He recorded his daily routine in 1912, including business transactions of farming — see separate PDF document.

Children of Christina & Donald McDonald :-

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|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Christina Margaret McDonald      | Born 5-3-1881.  | Died 15-10-1976 | Biographies 5157 |
| 2. Rachel Annie McDonald            | Born 28-11-1885 | Died Nov 1941   | Biographies 5158 |
| 3. Ethel Jane (Polly) McDonald      | Born 4-9-1886   | Died 26-3-1958  | Biographies 5159 |
| 4. Leonard William Cameron McDonald | Born 27-4-1896  | Died 5-3-1964   | Biographies 5160 |

- SOURCE : This biography was from page 135 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.