

Charles Stuart McDONALD 1854 to 27-12-1934 & Ellen McDONALD, nee HUTCHINSON

Biography as published in 1985 & 1995

Charles Stuart was the fifth child and second son of Ewen and Rachel McDonald and was born at Lower Finnis. There is no record of his birth at the office of the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages for South Australia so only the year is known. His grandparents were Christina and Donald McLean.

That year the Crimean War broke out when France and Britain declared war on Russia. Later in the year the charges of the Heavy and the Light brigades resulted in an allied victory over Russia at the Battle of Balaclava. During this war Queen Victoria instituted the Victoria Cross for valour. In New York the man who produced the Kodak camera in 1884, George Eastman, was born. In Victoria, on December 3, the Eureka Stockade uprising on the Ballarat goldfields was a major event in the state's history.

Nothing is known of Charles' schooling but he was taught to read and write, as were all children in the family. The two diaries of his father contain numerous references to Charlie. In 1864, aged about nine years, he was already helping with sheep work and ploughing. Ewen records on May 23, 1864. '*Charlie fetched 50 cabbage plants from Mr Mott*', and on June 6. '*sowed 3 acres wheat and scarified the same — Billy Nash & Charley with double plough*'. The same year, on August 19 the entry reads: '*Charlie left sheep out all night*'. The next day, '*Samuel came home with 68 sheep that was left out all night by Charlie*'.

The next year, on January 30, 1865, Charlie helped his father and Nash clear a road behind section 2010 with a horse and cart. During that year he was busy helping with sheep, ploughing and other farm jobs, and in November was especially mentioned in the diary for finding two swarms of bees. As a young man of 19 years Charlie moved with his family to Norardjuha in western Victoria. He selected allotment 38, Parish of Lowan, County of Lowan on April 6, 1874 at 2 o'clock and stated that he had '*placed conspicuous posts or cairns of stones with notices thereon at the corners of the allotment*' and that he was over 18 years of age, thus qualifying as an applicant. The justice of the peace who signed Charlie's application for licence was Robert Clark of Horsham, miller and grain merchant, cricket club patron, and trustee of the Total Abstinence Society. The document was also signed by Walter Madden, the district surveyor. The area comprised 320 acres, the price was £320, and the occupiers of the adjoining lands were R. Anderson and E. Walter. Charlie gave his former occupation as farmer of Strathalbyn. In 1877 Charlie received a letter from the Office of Lands and Survey, occupation branch.

4th December 1877

Sir, I have to acknowledge receipt of your renewed application under Section 20 of the Land Act 1869, for a lease of the land selected by you in the Parish of Lowan and I beg to point out that the signature thereto is Charles S. McDonald, whereas the signature to your application for license to occupy the land under Section 19 of the said Act is Charles McDonald.

Be good enough to furnish an explanation of the discrepancy, attested by a Justice of the Peace.

*I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant
Blundell
for the Secretary for Lands
Mr Charles S. McDonald
Noradjuha*

The discrepancy was dealt with and Charlie again applied for lease of his land on July 25, 1878. The improvements were listed.

- 35 chains of post and 2 rail fence at 2/- a chain

- 18 chains of post and rail and wire fence at 18/- a chain
- 73 chains of post and wire fence at 14/- a chain
- 22 chains of chock and log fence at 15/- a chain
- 80 chains of brush fence at 5/- a chain
- Cultivation of 34 acres at 30/- an acre. total cost £51.
- A dam. 132 ft x 33 ft x 3 ft deep £20
- Grubbing and clearing 36 acres at £2 an acre, £72
- Stock yard £10
- Barn £30
- Garden £30
- Total cost of improvements, £353-11-0.

On September 16. 1884, six years after his marriage, Charlie paid the final instalment on his block. In 1897 he purchased allotments 46 and 46A from his brother Jim and the following year finally paid for allotment 24 Parish of Nurrabel, which he had bought from his sister-in-law Christina McDonald.

Probably due to his early initiation into ploughing, Charlie became a champion ploughman, winning his first match at the age of 16 at Strathalbyn. Later in Victoria he won championships from Nhill to Ballarat. A letter from his daughter Lou to her brother Charles some time after the death of their father describes something of these matches. She had taken notes one day as her father talked about them.

He used a double furrow mostly and Mr James Treadwell the single furrow. They always went together to the matches and they took their ploughs on the train. Horses were provided. They would have a look at the ground they were to plough and then often work half the night on their ploughs altering shears or mouldboards or coulter or something like that according to the type of ground. Mr Treadwell I think always won with the single furrow. Dad won other prizes such as ploughing up to angle, and best crown and strike. They had to measure out their own lands etc and put up their own pegs and the furrow had to be so many inches deep. I am not sure but I think this varied at different places.

At one of the places where the ground was very heavy, one of Dad's horses knocked up and he was offered a horse never in a plough before — they had a given time to finish their land — but he was going well, so gave it a trial, lost a lot of time in changing horses, but he won and was always talking of this when ploughing talk came on; reckoned he never travelled so fast behind a plough and jumped for joy when told he had won.

At Noradjuha in 1878, Charles Stuart married Ellen Hutchinson. Ellen was the daughter and third child of Henry William Morris and Jane Hutchinson, nee Baker. and was born on October 18, 1857 at Balmoral, Victoria. In 1850, Henry Hutchinson had migrated from England and disembarked at Geelong. Here he was engaged to work on Fulham Station, owned by George Armytage on the Olenelg River near Balmoral. On November 15, 1853, at the Coleraine Church of England, Henry married Jane Baker. Jane was the daughter of John and Ann Baker, nee Lewis, and was born in 1837 at Stilton, Huntingdonshire, England. Henry was born in England in 1829 and died in 1881. Jane survived her husband by forty-nine years and died in 1922. The Hutchinson family eventually left Fulham and worked at Mt Sturgeon station for years. In 1875 they were among the first settlers at Nurrabel and lived only a couple of miles east of the McDonald family. Their descendants occupy the land to this day.

Charlie and Ellen lived on the selection that was to become *Innisvale*. They had eight known children, three of whom died in infancy, one from snake bite. There is no true record of birth for the family, so those whose birth dates are known are listed in chronological order. The Nurrabel cemetery records show that on December 26, 1889, C. S. McDonald paid for the interment of one child, not named. During the 1890s, Charlie and Ellen parted and she made her home in Stawell, Victoria, where she was a staunch member of the Salvation Army. Ellen died on July 13, 1927. It is not known where she died or where she was buried. Her burial is not listed in the records of Stawell or Horsham cemeteries.

Charlie was a member of the Horsham Agricultural Society and despite a distance of twenty-five miles over poor roads to travel to meetings he served a four-year term on the committee from January 30, 1904 until September 14, 1907. Early in January of 1904 the family had been shocked and saddened by the tragic death of their son and brother, Hector. Charlie was a member of the Noradjuha Rifle Club and on May 13, 1905, a Noradjuha team including C. S. McDonald won the Wannon Trophy. It was over 400 and 500 yards, and Charlie scored over 400 yards. While a member of the club he won the VRA medal and bar, that is he won the medal twice. Every club within the Victorian Rifle Association has an annual competition among its members at which the VRA medal is awarded. Nowadays if a member has won the medal he is not eligible to enter again. When Charlie approved of a person or deed he would hold a hand in the air and say, 'Good shot, well done', an expression acquired no doubt through his interest in rifle-shooting. Consequently he was known far and wide as Good Shot McDonald.

After the marriage of his son Charles junior in 1915, Charlie retired to a house, *Claremont*, in Dimboola Road, Horsham, with his daughters Lou and Ivy. His grandson Noel recalled that a small fox-terrier called Paddy was part of the household. Noel also remembers his grandfather's yarn about some of the settlers' children in the 1870s. When the Wimmera was thrown open for selection all persons, male and female, eighteen years of age and over were eligible to apply for a block of land. When applying they would be asked whether they were eighteen years or over and they would reply 'yes'. In fact they were under the age but in one of their shoes was a piece of paper on which was written '18 years'.

While living in Horsham, Charlie often stayed with his daughter Esther and her husband Jack McKenry at Toolondo. He had a cabin built behind their home with the name *Balmarino* above the door and lived here during his visit. The name was a memory of his childhood spent on that earlier *Balmarino* beside the Finnis River in South Australia. For the last few years of his life Charlie lived with his daughter Lou and her husband Jim Ellis in the Melbourne suburb of Hampton. He died there two days after Christmas Day 1934 and was buried in Nurrabiel cemetery. A headstone marks his grave.

The Horsham Times published an obituary on January 4, 1935.

Regret has been expressed at the passing of yet another of the Wimmera's pioneers in Mr. Charles Stuart McDonald, late of Noradjuha and Horsham, who passed away at the residence of his daughter, Mrs J. Ellis, Imbros St., Hampton on Thursday 27th December after a long illness. Deceased, who had attained the age of 80 years, was born at Strathalbyn, S.A., in 1854. At the age of 18 he came overland with his parents, brothers and sisters and selected land near Noradjuha. Eventually acquiring the land selected by the other members of his family, he farmed and grazed it successfully until 20 years ago, when he retired to live in Horsham.

This property known as "Innisvale" is still carried on by his son, Mr. C. W. S. McDonald. The late Mr. McDonald left Horsham for Hampton four years ago. He came of a Pioneering Stock, his father being the first man to take sheep overland from Sydney to Adelaide in 1839. The trip, which took 12 months to accomplish, was fraught with continual danger from the blacks and trouble crossing the rivers. On this occasion several men were speared to death and their drays looted, which necessitated the party subsisting on fresh mutton, supplemented by such game as could be shot for six weeks.

The late Mr. McDonald in his early years was a champion ploughman, winning his first match at Strathalbyn at the age of 16, later winning championship matches from Nhill to Ballarat. In his day he was also recognised as one of the champion rifle shots of the Wimmera.

His wife and four children predeceased him.

The remaining members of the family are Louie (Mrs. J. Ellis, Hampton), Esther (Mrs J. McKenry, Toolondo), Charles (Noradjuha) and Ivy (Mrs. Barrett, Sandringham) to whom deep sympathy has been extended. Mrs. J. McDonald (Mockinya), Mrs. Raggatt (Horsham), Mrs. Mott (Sydney), Jim (W.A.), Jack (Geelong) and Angus (Brisbane) are surviving sisters and brothers.

The body of the deceased was brought from Melbourne to Horsham by train. A short service was conducted at the Presbyterian Church by the Rev. E. G. Petherick, assisted by Mr. J. S. Joyce, before the cortege started for the Nurrabiel Cemetery. The coffin-bearers at the church were Messrs L. McDonald, Harold Smith, Wilfred Smith, Norman Smith, H. A. Baker, N. Mills, representing the rifle club, and at the grave Messrs W. McDonald, Ted McDonald, A. McDonald, L. McDonald, J. McKenry and R. Hutchinson.

The funeral arrangements were carried out at Melbourne by Monkhouse and Son and at Horsham by Messrs. A. Weight & Sons.

Children of Charles and Ellen :-

1. <i>Hector</i> Ewen Stuart McDonald	Born 1883	Died 7-1-1904	Biographies 5162
2. Beatrice <i>Louisa</i> McDonald	Born 24-2-1885	Died 22-8-1970	Biographies 5163
3. Amy Helena Victoria McDonald	Born 17-12-1886	Died 29-11-1887	Biographies 5164
4. <i>Esther</i> May McDonald	Born 26-12-1889	Died 15-7-1975	Biographies 5165
5. <i>Charles</i> William Stanley McDonald	Born 28-11-1892	Died 30-11-1968	Biographies 5166
6. <i>Ivy</i> Ellen McDonald	Born 19-9-1893	Died 27-5-1981	Biographies 5167
7. Hetty McDonald		Died in infancy	
8. Ruth McDonald		Died in infancy	

- SOURCE : This biography was from page 155 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.