

Mary RAGGATT, nee McDONALD 30-7-1857 to 28-4-1935 & William RAGGATT

Biography as published in 1985 & 1995

Mary was the sixth child and fourth daughter of Ewen and Rachel McDonald, and was born at Lower Finniss, South Australia. Her grandparents were Christina and Donald McLean.

The year coincided with the beginning of the mutiny against British rule in India, the composer Edward Elgar and the writer Joseph Conrad were born, and Anthony Trollope wrote *Barchester Towers*. In New South Wales the ship *Dunbar* was wrecked at the entrance to Sydney Harbour. There was one survivor.

Mary was educated at home by governess and at the age of 18 years accompanied her family across the border to start a new life at Noradjuha. On June 24, 1874 at 2 p.m. Mary McDonald of Strathalbyn pegged her block, and two days later at Horsham signed an application for a lease. Her block was allotment 25, Parish of Nurrabel, County of Lowan, and the licence was granted on October 1, 1874. The purchase price was £321 for 320 acres, no roads and 3 perches.

Four years later, on September 13, 1878, she signed an application for lease or Crown grant by licensee. At that stage the land had been improved by :-

- 16 chains of post, rail and wire fence at a cost of 20/- a chain
- 59 chains of log fences at 14/- a mile
- 91 chains of log and brush fence at 8/- a mile
- There was a dwelling on the land of wattle and dab, of 12 feet by 20 feet with two rooms.
- 34 acres had been cleared and grubbed at £2 an acre, and 70 acres at 10/- an acre.
- During the first year, cultivation consisted of 12 acres of wheat, possibly dug by shovel and almost certainly sown by hand, with a yield of 4 bushels an acre.
- In the second year, not including the first year, the yield was 8 bushels an acre from 17 acres.
- For the third year, not including the first and second years, there were 14 acres at 10 bushels an acre.
- That meant 43 acres cleared in three years at 30/- an acre.
- There was also a dam valued at £10.

All the land was enclosed by boundary fences but there was no dividing fence between Mary's land and that of her sister Margaret. Their father Ewen purchased Mary's block on June 20, 1883.

Mary married William Raggatt at the Horsham Presbyterian Church. Bill was born on March 10, 1850, the eldest child of Thomas and Anne Sophia Raggatt, nee Stephens. Thomas Raggatt is said to have been a police trooper with the Adelaide-Mt Alexander gold escort, a librarian and a postmaster. Young Bill had journeyed to Victoria with Ewen and Rachel McDonald and family in 1874. He was a bullock driver who eventually had his own team, and always wore a calfskin waistcoat. One of these, plus his cabbage-tree hat and his quart pot are still in the possession of the family.

Thomas Raggatt was born at Chipping Sodbury, Gloucestershire, England, on December 28, 1826, the youngest son of Daniel and Hannah Raggatt. At Marshfield, Gloucestershire, on March 20, 1848, Thomas married Anne Sophia Stephens, born on March 21, 1828. at Euly, North Marshfield. In December 1848, nine months after their marriage, the young couple arrived in the ship *Baboo* at Port Adelaide, South Australia. Thomas Raggatt died on October 7, 1900. aged 74 years, and Anne Sophia died on September 16, 1927, aged 99 years. They are buried in Strathalbyn cemetery, South Australia.

Their children were:

1. William (Bill) Raggatt	Born 10-3-1850	Died 18-10-1936
2. Mary Elizabeth Raggatt	Born 29-1-1852	Died 1931
3. Eliza Anne Raggatt	Born 28-10-1853	Died 1928
4. Thomas Raggatt	Born 4-12-1855	Died 1943
5. Herbert Daniel Raggatt	Born 30-10-1857	Died 1924
6. Sophia Stephens Raggatt	Born 17-11-1859	Died 1952
7. Ernest Raggatt	Born 10-12-1861	Died 1938
8. John James Raggatt	Born 6-1-1863	Died 1946
9. Albert Edward Raggatt	Born 7-12-1865	Died 1949
10. Hannah Ada Raggatt	Born 4-6-1868	Died 1962
11. Lloyd Harry Raggatt	Born 28-2-1871	Died 1910

Mary and Bill lived on a farm near her parents until the turn of the century when they moved to a farm at Polkemmet, in the Wimmera, near her brother Jack. There were nine children of the marriage, six daughters and three sons. Ethel Lugton, nee Scott, of Clear Lake remembered that Bill had a lovely horse called Grace Darling.

Mary and Bill eventually parted and she and the younger children lived with her parents for a time, eventually purchasing a house at 94 Baillie Street, Horsham, opposite the hospital, now the Wimmera Base Hospital.

Mary's daughter Norma remembered her as a wonderful mother, good housekeeper, and capable dressmaker as were most women at that time. Rhee Smith, Mary's grand-daughter, remembered that Gran told her the exciting tale of when she and her brother Charlie were still living on the Finniss River in South Australia and were sent the eight miles to Milang to collect a parcel for their mother. This contained a new dress for one of the older sisters to wear to a ball at Government House in Adelaide. The kids couldn't resist opening the parcel and of course could not rewrap it properly. They gave up and set off home to the farmhouse, quaking in their shoes in anticipation of their fate. When mother and big sister saw the mess the punishment was severe.

Every Friday, Mary would walk to Horsham's main street and buy her meat from Wright and Riley's butcher's shop. The companion on this walk would be Toby, her fierce little Australian terrier; and it was said that only she could handle him. Every Saturday night she and Norma would walk across the paddocks behind their house in Baillie Street to Lampard's in Pryors Lane for tea. This area is now covered with housing. Meanwhile Bill lived much of the time with his son Archie and family in the Pimpinio district.

In 1912 Donald William McDonald, brother of Mary, recorded in his diary: '*6th September - Wm. Reggett brought home my bullock wagon, 7th September - Reggett went home.*'

Mary died at her home on April 28, 1935, aged 79 years, after a long period of ill-health. She had been nursed by Norma and her daughter-in-law May. Mary was buried in Horsham cemetery. Bill always said that when he died he wanted nothing more than to be buried wrapped in his saddle blanket. He died tragically on October 18, 1936, aged 86 years. While grazing Archie's bullocks along the railway track, he was hit by a train near Pimpinio. The Horsham Times of Tuesday October 20, 1936 reported the accident.

*MAN KILLED ON RAILWAY LINE AT PIMPINIO
SHOCKING INJURIES BY GOODS TRAIN
HORSHAM AMBULANCE CRASHED ON WAY TO SCENE.
DOCTOR, CONSTABLE AND NURSE INJURED*

Receiving shocking injuries when he was struck by a goods train about a mile on the west side of Pimpinio on Friday morning, Mr. William Raggatt, aged 89 years, was killed instantaneously. Mr. William Raggatt who was a well known bullock driver in the Wimmera district and a resident of Pimpinio was looking after his bullocks while they fed on the road near the line when he met his death.

Called to the scene of the accident, the Horsham Ambulance, in speeding to the spot along the Western Highway, crashed and turned over twice. The driver Mr. G. Balderstone, Dr. G. Forsyth, Nurse D. Hodge, of the Horsham Base Hospital, and First Constable L. R. Nelson, had remarkable escapes from serious injury.

LYING BESIDE LINE OUT OF WIND

The late Mr. Raggatt, despite his great age, was still very active, and on Friday morning he set out on horseback from his home at Pimpinio to graze his bullocks on the road. The animals were feeding near the second railway crossing from Pimpinio and he dismounted from his horse to have a rest. He was lying down near the line out of the wind and his horse was standing on the opposite side of the permanent way browsing in the grass. According to a witness, Mr. Raggatt was seen to get up as a goods train approached. He was slightly deaf and would not hear the train until it was fairly close. He apparently got up suddenly to go over the line to catch his horse, but when midway across the rails he was struck by the engine.

Frightful injuries were inflicted and portions of the body were dismembered. A gold watch which was found in the clothing of deceased had stopped at 10.20 a.m.

The Dimboola police were on the scene shortly after the accident and they removed the body to Dimboola. An inquiry into the tragedy was opened and adjourned after the Deputy Coroner. Mr. G. F. Weidemann, had given an order for burial.

The train, which was travelling towards Dimboola, was driven by Mr. M. Gillies.

A pathetic incident was observed by those who had to visit the scene. The victim's cattle dog refused to let anyone approach the body of his master for some time, but after a while the faithful animal was coaxed away and tied with a piece of rope to a fence. Later, however, the dog gained his freedom and went over to the remains of the old man.

AMBULANCE CRASHED WHEN HALF A MILE FROM THE SCENE

Immediately Mr. J. Balderstone, the driver of the Horsham Ambulance, received a message that there had been an accident near Pimpinio, he set out for the scene of the tragedy accompanied by Dr. G. Forsyth, Nurse D. Hodge and Constable L. R. Nelson.

At this time no one in the ambulance knew the circumstances of the accident, nor that the man they were speeding to save was already dead. The message that the driver received was that there had been a man injured.

HEARD EXPLOSION

Describing the ambulance accident to a "Times" reporter, Mr. Balderstone said that he was driving at about 50 miles an hour. "Dr. Forsyth, Nurse Hodge and myself were in the front seat and Constable Nelson was in the back portion of the vehicle," he stated. "We were about half a mile from the crossing where the man had been killed when there was an explosion, which appeared to come from the rear. I thought a tyre had blown. Simultaneously with the report, however, the car locked. It skidded from one side of the road to the other and I held it up with the back wheels dragging for about 30 yds. The pace had been decreased to about 30 miles an hour when it over-turned, rolling completely over twice and coming to rest on its side.

DR. FORSYTH THROUGH GLASS DOOR

"When the vehicle had reached a stationary position," added Mr. Balderstone, "I looked around and the nurse had fallen over me and we had our noses in the grass. Dr. Forsyth was missing. He must have been thrown through the glass window. I was the only one who was not hurt, and I immediately set about getting Nurse Hodge and Constable Nelson out, because I thought that the car might catch fire. When I looked in the back Constable Nelson was lying amidst upturned stretchers and blankets. His had been a most unenviable experience."

RENDERED FIRST AID

Mr. Balderstone, as soon as he had removed the occupants, rendered first aid to Dr. Forsyth and Constable Nelson both of whom were bleeding from cuts. The nurse was suffering from shock. When the news of the second accident reached Horsham, the Town Council foreman Mr. A. E. Watts in the council truck left Horsham with another stretcher on board. When he reached the scene of the accident Dr. Forsyth and Constable Nelson were lying on stretchers on the side of the road.

With Mr. Balderstone he went on to the railway accident and found that Mr. Raggatt had been dead before the ambulance left Horsham.

Those injured in the ambulance smash were brought to Horsham by Dr. Willing of Horsham, and Dr. Bouvier of Dimboola.

Constable Nelson was admitted to the Horsham Base Hospital and is suffering from a fractured shoulder and painful muscular injuries to the back. Dr. Forsyth was treated for a bad cut on the head and back injuries. When X-rayed on Sunday it was revealed that one rib had been fractured at the point of juncture with the spine. Nurse Hodge suffered from mild shock and she has now practically recovered.

BRAKES SEIZED

Commenting on the cause of the accident, Mr. Balderstone said that the brakes seized and the car became locked. With the exception of the wind-screen, all the glass windows were broken. The engine is badly damaged and the body bent considerably.

The ambulance, which is owned by the Victorian Civil Ambulance Service, is entrusted to the care of the Horsham Base Hospital committee of management. The vehicle is insured.

STRUCK BY STRETCHER

Interviewed in hospital after the accident, Const. Nelson said that when the ambulance rolled over he was tossed about the back like a cork. "It was a pretty heavy bump in the back by one of the stretchers that hurt most," he said, "glass was flying all around me and I was fortunate that I only received one small cut on the back of the neck."

The ambulance was towed into Horsham on Friday afternoon.

The condition of the three injured people was reported yesterday to be satisfactory.

PERSONAL DETAILS OF DECEASED

The late Mr. Raggatt, who was born at Strathalbyn, South Aust., lived in that state for 22 yrs, and in Victoria for 67 yrs. He was married at the age 27 yrs to Miss Mary McDonald (who predeceased him about 18 months ago). For many years he lived at Pimpinio and was well known throughout the Wimmera. Deep sympathy has been extended to the bereaved in their tragic loss. Members of the family are — Mary (Mrs. Taplin, Horsham), Jessie (Mrs A. Lampard, Horsham), Sophie (Horsham), Grace (Mrs. Williamson, Ararat), Ewen Archer (Horsham), Flora (Melbourne), Norma (Horsham), Angus (Ararat), Murray (Marnoo).

The funeral took place at the Horsham Cemetery on Saturday and the Reverend E. O. Petherick conducted the service at the graveside. The coffinbearers were Messrs. A. Raggatt, M. Raggatt, Arch Raggatt, C. Wik, J. Swan, and H. Bartlett. Messrs. L. Hutchesson and Son carried out the mortuary arrangements.

Children of Mary and Bill :-

1.	Mary Elizabeth Raggatt	Born 4-6-1875	Died 28-1-1957	Biographies 5169
2.	Christina Jessie Raggatt	Born 11-5-1876	Died 1-12-1952	Biographies 5170
3.	Annie Sophia Raggatt	Born 17-10-1877	Died during 1930s	Biographies 5171
4.	Grace Adelaide Raggatt	Born 1-1-1880	Died 1950	Biographies 5172
5.	Ewen Archer Hales Raggatt	Born 17-6-1883	Died 30-4-1972	Biographies 5173
6.	Flora Finnis Raggatt	Born 17-7-1885	Died 21-8-1963	Biographies 5174
7.	Norma Lowan Raggatt	Born 31-10-1887	Died 23-4-1981	Biographies 5175
8.	Angus Lloyd Raggatt	Born 25-2-1890	Died 26-10-1940	Biographies 5176
9.	Murray William Raggatt	Born 24-5-1892	Died 2-4-1982	Biographies 5177

- SOURCE : This biography was from page 171 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.