

Charles Soward McLEAN & Maria Elizabeth McLEAN, nee KRUGER

Biography as published in 1995

CHARLES SOWARD McLEAN born 2/3/1859 at Strathalbyn_ S.A, The 7th and youngest child of Archibald and Ann (nee Janeway) of "Angas Bank", Strathalbyn and of "Melrose", Angas Plains.

Parents : Anna Soward McLean (nee Janeway) & Archibald McLean

Grandparents : Christina McLean (nee McPhee) & Donald McLean

HISTORY: He was known in the family as "Soward". He remained the longest of the brothers with their father at Naracoorte, and left at the age of 20 in 1879 to join his brother Archibald Sinclair at Minyip in the Dunmunkle district. The first child was born three years before Soward's marriage. The birth certificate of Ellen Elizabeth is dated 1881, the mother, Maria Elizabeth Kruger was 18 and no father recorded but she was undoubtedly Soward's child.

MARRIAGE: at Murtoa, Victoria, at St. Georges Lutheran Church to **Maria Elizabeth Kruger** (b. 29/6/1864) by licence. Pastor W. Peters officiated. She was the daughter of Karl and Ernestine Kruger of Lrnithgow near Hamilton, Victoria. The witnesses were George Henry McLean and John Henry Rennison both of Minyip. Maria was the 6th Kruger child. Some history of her (in summary) from the Kruger family record:

Before her marriage, as did many German women and in her teens, Maria worked very hard on her father's farm at Linlithgow. She cut wheat with a sickle, sheared sheep, made haystacks and drove wagons to Stawell railway station with the crop, the nearest station at that time. Her father gave her 50 pounds (\$100) as a wedding gift. As a member of the family she had received no wages for her years of heavy labour. Soward owned a block of land near Minyip where he built a small adobe house for Maria and they remained there for several years before moving to 100 acres at Pine Grove in the Mallee country. Soward worked shares with other farmers at the same time as he cleared his own land, at first with an axe before inventing a quicker system using two bullocks and asix foot long curved log between them. This mallee land could only be leased so they went on to Beulah West and further share farming. Work was easier as clearing was by horse treader. Maria was not again required to do any heavy farm work. except on just one occasion when Soward was in S A. arranging his next and last move.

This move took place on 26/4/1910 to an allotted block at Kongorong in the Mt Gambler, S.A. district, a grazing and dairying property of 1875 acres which they set about improving. Soward represented the Kongorong District for the Benara Council and later the Port MacDonnell Council from 1923 to 1930. Whilst serving there the Lavarwill rabbit fumigator was invented Councillor McLean humurously suggested that a photo be taken of the rabbit as it could indeed be the last, His remark came to the notice of William Bennier, a good cartoonist at that time, and in 1926 he drew Soward with his last rabbit. A copy of the picture is on the next page.

In later years, in reminiscent mood, Soward said of Morambro Station where his lather had purchased land (in 1874) Mary Oliver had been the original occupant of 103 square miles. Then Brown and Oliver were in partnership. Brown was killed by blacks and pinned to a log by a spear.

Soward himself came to be known as "Old Mac" and he remembered the founder of Naracoorte, William McIntosh as well as many other old identities. He lived on to his 93rd year.

The most important day for the Ashby family was the first Monday of each month, Council day. Not only would the children have a holiday (the school was in the Council chambers) but Grandfather would drive past the house after the meeting and go to the Kongorong store. He bought 1/- worth of boiled lollies, which was an enormous bag and throw it out to the Ashby grandchildren sitting on the fence on his way home. Sometimes he would drive past in

the horse and cart, wave and yell, "Sorry the shop has no lollies today", then throw them out. The kids would scramble and fight to get as many as possible before their mother came out and took charge.

Soward and his neighbour 'Old Hodge' were very friendly and often played cards, betting between themselves on many occasions for years. Every now and again one would accuse the other of cheating and they would fall out for a while. On one such occasion Old Hodge had been to Mt Gambler and bought an old horse drawn hearse (motor cars had just come in) and on the way home it started to rain so Old Hodge tied the horse to the fence and got inside. Unfortunately the hearse door locked and could only be opened from the outside. Hodge was stuck. Soward came along but went straight past him and left him there... they weren't talking. (The rubber tyres from the hearse were taken off and used on their gigs.)

Grandfather McLean loved dates and would buy them from the Riverland by the boxful. Whenever you went to see him he would take out this enormous box and offer you one.

On the death of her daughter Ellen in 1914, Ellen's two sons, Barney (7) and Hugh (4) went to live with the Maria and Soward who reared the boys along with their own 12. Maria was a wonderful person and a fantastic cook, the oven was full at all times.

Final notes concerning Charles (Soward) McLean from Di. Facey of Millicent, S.A.:

"At Kongorong, Soward built a house for the children and his wife Maria, it was of "tin". re. galvanized iron, with no doors connecting the rooms, much the same as at "Waterloo", Angas Plains, house of John McLean. Each room could only be reached from the outside. Soward also owned land at Cape Douglas.

He was a great story teller and with children on his knees, he would entertain them and he was always the hero, capturing the rustlers etc. The children (or grandchildren) would follow the tale with wide open eyes and rapt expressions. At Soward's table no child was permitted to talk or make an observation. if it did so there was a sharp rap on the head with his fork. His theory was the old one that "children should be seen but not heard while eating".

Until his last illness he was at no time hospitalised.

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DEATHS: of Maria Elizabeth aged 81 at Kongorong on 18/4/1945. Interred at Mt Gambler. Charles Soward McLean died at Mt Gambler on 4/4/1951 aged 92 years. Interred at the Mt Gambler Cemetery.

OBITUARY: From the "Border Watch" dated July 28th 1951.

"Mr Charles Soward McLean died at his residence Davidson Street (Mt Gambler) on Wednesday April 4th 1951. He worked at south east stations as a youth and travelled throught SA - Victoria and N.S.W. At the age of 25 he and his brother Archibald bought a section of land from a station near Minyip, Victoria and grew wheat. He sold to come to Kongorong, S.A in 1912 (error - 1910) and lived there until 1950 the year he retired to Davidson Street. He was born at Strathalbyn on 2/3/1859. Mr McLean was the last surviving member of his family. His brothers Archibald, and George and sisters Harriet Warland, Mrs Rose Bunday. and Mrs Christine Payne all predeceased him. Mr McLean married Miss Maria Elizabeth Kruger who predeceased him. Surviving children (of 12) - Donald Lindsay. Malcolm Wallace. Myrtle Sophia. George Stephen. Soward Herbert. Duncan Stanley, Archibald James, Maria Mabel (Mrs Ashby), Stella Christina (Mrs Talbot). Mr McLean was a Justice of the Peace, a Councillor representing Benara Ward for six years before retiring and a member of the Presbyterian Church. He was interred at Mt Gambler."

The 12 children of Charles (Soward) McLean and his wife Maria Elizabeth (nee Kruger) of Minyip Vic and Kongorong SA :-.

1. Ellen Elizabeth McLean - born 14/12/1881 at Minyip, Vic. Marriage to Patrick Lavery. [See biographies 5098](#)
2. Angus Charles McLean born 8/10/1885 at Minyip. Victoria. The midwife was Mrs Henry Penny who attended all of Maria's accouchments at Minyip including that of Ellen. His occupation: Contractor He did not marry. Death: He died on 25/1/1915 at the Black swamp. County of Stawell. aged 29 years through placing a dynamite cap in his mouth. An inquest was held on the 26th January at Stawell, Vic. And he was buried there on the 27th. Death was said to be self inflicted.
3. Archibald James McLean born 8/10/1887 at Minyip. Vic. His occupation: Channel maker. Residence: Minyip Unmarried. Death: 15/5/1958 aged 70 years. at Minyip. Interred at Minyip
4. Soward Herbert McLean born 12/4/1889 at Sheep Hills, Victoria, unmarried. Occupation: Channel maker and contractor. Residence: Vin Street, Avon Plains (from death certificate) - Victoria. Death: Aged 75 years on 26/5/1946 at Hawthorn, Vic. of heart failure and cancer. Cremated at Western Suburbs Crematorium, Altona, Vic
5. Harriet Esther McLean born 25/5/1890 at Minyip, Vic. Died: aged 11 years on 28/11/1901 at Beulah-Warracknabeal, Vic. of what appears to have been appendicitis. Interred Warracknabeal Cemetery. (Death Certificate).
6. Maria Mabel (Mary) McLean born 27/10/1891 at Beulah, Victoria. Marriage to James Edward Ashby. [See biographies 5099](#)
7. Estella Christine McLean born 9/4/1893 at Beulah, Victoria. Married: Charles James Talbot. [See biographies 5110](#)
8. Duncan Stanley (Bob) McLean born 4/3/1896 at Beulah, Victoria. Married: Pearl Alice Waldon (b. 1/8/1897). His occupation: Foreman with the State Rivers Department, Victoria. Residence : Belmont, Victoria. Deaths: Duncan Stanley (Bob) McLean at Geelong on 22/7/1972 aged 76 years He was interred at Geelong. Pearl Alice died at the Millicent Hospital, S.A. on 16/3/1991 aged 93 years interred at Geelong with her husband. They had no children.
9. Malcolm Wallace McLean born 30/5/1898 at Sheep Hills, Victoria. Married 1st to Mary Taylor and married 2nd to Irene Esther Gaskin. [See biographies 5111](#)
10. Lindsay Donald McLean born 18/4/1899 at Beulah West, Victoria. Married: Mary Janet Chant. [See biographies 5113](#)
11. George Stephen McLean b. 15/4/1900 at Beulah, Victoria, the 11th of the 12 children. Unmarried. Moved to Kongorong with his parents. Occupation: Windmill "Fixer". That is the setting up and repairing of windmills. After the death of his parents he moved in with his sister Myrtle "Girly" at Mt Gambler. It is said that she "wore the pants" nagged him and called him a silly old fool. George was M.C at local dances when Girly played the piano. Death: at Mt Gambler on 22/5/1982 aged 82 years. interred at Mt Gambler Cemetery.
12. Myrtle Sophie McLean b 27/10/1901 at Beulah, Victoria Unmarried. "Girly" or "Girl" as she was called in the family was still only a school girl when the family moved to Kongorong. S.A. She had violin lessons from a sister at the Convent of Mercy and became adept with this instrument and also the piano and played for local dances, socials and weddings. When her aunt Christine Payne (nee McLean) left her a legacy, with help from her father, she purchased land and began a successful career at farming until retirement. She enjoyed competitive tennis (Kongorong Tennis Club) and purchased her first car - a Buick. which was delivered to her from Melbourne and the salesman taught her to drive. Her favourite mare, Gwennie, was ridden at local shows and photos of these occasions were displayed at her home. She exhibited her skills at cooking at local shows and during W.W.2 worked for the local Red Cross. She was a foundation member of the Kongorong Methodist Church and taught Sunday School. She is remembered with affection by the family. Death: at the Mt Gambler Hospital on 9/9/1991 in her 90th year. Interred at Mt Gambler Cemetery.

• SOURCE : This biography is an extract from "The History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants" which was published in 1995 – page 429 to 454.
• 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.