

## Jane CHERITON, nee McLEAN & John CHERITON

Biography as published in 1995

**JANE McLEAN** - baptised on 16/8/1830 at Kilmallie, Argyllshire. 9th child of Donald and Christina (nee McPhee) McLean.

She was aged 7 years when (1830-1886) the family left Scotland to arrive in South Australia by the "Navarino" on 6/12/1837. She is shown in the S.A. Census of 1841 as aged "under 14" and residing with her parents at Strathalbyn.

**MARRIAGE:** (possibly at Holy Trinity, Adelaide as her husband was English) to John Cheriton (b.1829 at Exeter, Devonshire). John arrived in S.A. in 1848 by the "Spartan" when he was aged 19, so he and Jane were both very young when they married the following year.

**HISTORY:** Some reminiscences of John, of his arrival at Strathalbyn were published in the "Southern Argus" of 17/5/1906 (writing in response to suggestions for a large weir on the River Angas):-

"I wish to state my impressions of 57 years since I left Adelaide in a rickety spring cart for Strathalbyn. I arrived at the top of the hill this side of Rankine's Creek (later Doctors Creek after Dr John Rankine). I was struck by the magnificence of the view of the plains, lakes and belts of timber and scrub that I saw before me, and thought it a veritable "Land of Goshen". On I came, timber before me, timber to right and left of me, until I arrived at about where High Street is now where on the right was a thatched hut, and in front an unpretentious stone building that I found out afterwards was the Scotch Kirk. We drove down the Peninsular and crossed a dry bed of the Angas as it is now called, to the store and Post Office kept in a room about 6 by 8 feet, the Postmaster living in a room adjoining of smaller dimensions still, built of wattle and daub with a paling roof, in fact with the exception of the Kirk and the hotel (later to be the "Terminus" and built by Donald Gollan, but the first "hotel" on the site consisted of a thatched roof resting on 4 poles with a tarpaulin drawn around) there was not a stone building in the township.

We went from the store to the hotel, the host of which sent a blackfellow with me to my destination, a two storeyed building, a glimpse of which I had caught sight of before entering the township, (Note by E.M.S.: This was "Glenbarr" built by William Rankine 1842, but at the time the upper story had attic rooms and only c. 1874 became the present two storeys of today). I do not intend to write the story of my life but one little episode is I think, worth recording.

There was service held at the Kirk on Sabbath days. but not every Sabbath if I remember rightly. I dressed myself in my best and went to church; it was a surprise to myself and to those in attendance, and I can assure you I was looked at more than the minister. All wondered who I could possibly be; some said one thing, some another, but they all agreed I was "a perfect gentleman".

A title I trust I have not forfeited during my residence among you. My surprise was that I expected to see a lot of well dressed men and women at the service but instead the men wore moleskin trousers and blue shirts with cabbage tree hats, not all, but the greater proportion; the women wore print dresses and sun bonnets, or bonnets of a similar shape. This fact however, did not detract or hide their blooming faces from sight as do the monstrous abortions of the present day (1906).

I forgot to mention my dress - it was a blue frock coat, figured satin waist-coat, blue cloth trousers, silk tie, white shirt and bell topper hat. It was the first and last time I went to church dressed so elaborately". (Although two publications give his age on arrival as 18, his obituary says 20).

An article from "Descriptive Australian and Federal Guide" of 1890 in telling John Cheriton's story gives that soon after his arrival he resumed his former occupation as farmer, at Strathalbyn, where he was employed at ten shillings (\$1) per week, and his highest wage being one pound (\$2). There is no indication as to where he and Jane lived after their 1849 marriage. In 1851 he left her with a baby daughter and went by water to the Victorian goldfields according to the article and was absent for 3 months, but went again and in all spent 9 months at the diggings and did well the 2nd time. His name is listed with those who consigned their gold to the first mounted trooper escorted wagon from Mt Alexander and Castlemaine under Police Commissioner Alexander Tolmer in March 1852.

By the time of John's return land for sale was available at Belvidere and Angas Plains and his first purchase was 142 acres at 4 pounds 10 shillings per acre (\$9). He increased his land to 2500 acres on the left side of the Milang Road going from Strathalbyn, halfway between Belvidere and Angas Plains. He was a member of the first Bremer District Council of October 1854 and was Chairman for many years. By this time there were 69 gazetted owners in the area. He and Jane built their house on Section 2762 and 4 generations farmed John's selection between 1853 and 1938. The house was at first "Field View Cottage" then became "Field View Lodge".

June 1855: He put to the Bremer Council a memorial that Section 2760 Angas Plains be reserved for a school, church and cemetery.

March 5th 1856: he won first prize for fruit at the first agricultural show held at Strathalbyn. (The Rankine Diary).

Oct. 27, 1857: (also the diary) Matthew Rankine, canvassing the district for donations towards the enlarging of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Strathalbyn wrote that John Cheriton was offended by being asked. (Matthew could not have taken into account that John was Anglican).

Aug. 2, 1858: Matthew and John amicably together had full charge of the district ploughing matches

1861 Lake Plains School was built on the bank of the Bremer on a half acre given by John Cheriton (and opened 1864) for the benefit of the children of that area. (The Angas Plains School land was given by Archie McLean and John Cheriton was one of the first three Trustees with his brother-in-law John McLean).

In 1861 M. Rankine complained that his neighbour, Cheriton, allowed his cattle to break into the Rankine wheat.

10/3/1865 - John went canvassing for the election on behalf of John Dunn and James Rankine. He was taking an interest in public affairs and was appointed a Justice of the Peace that year. In the November at the Milang school annual examinations for the S.A. Council of Education. John Cheriton together with the Rev. C. D. Watt was an examiner, showing that he had been well educated at Exeter, Devonshire.

He was an enthusiastic supporter of the horse tram which opened first from Goolwa in 1856 to Port Elliot then in 1869 was begun from Strathalbyn with a grand opening on April 23rd by the then Governor Sir James Fergusson who drove a dray with four grays up from Adelaide. Speeches were made at the "Terminus" Hotel at Strathalbyn followed by 200 persons riding in the tram trucks to Pt Elliot and Victor Harbor and no doubt the Cheritons were foremost on this gala occasion.

In 1867 John had been appointed an executor of the Will of his mother-in-law Christina McLean with Strathalbyn solicitor James Bonnar (she died 1869). In that year (1869) he was elected to Parliament and represented Mt Barker District until 1872 in the House of Assembly being elected 3 times. His chief object was to obtain a reform to enable farmers and others to purchase land directly from the Government. In this he was successful. He

advocated Protection only to Colonial produce and industry. He disapproved of Boards and considered that land should be classified and left open for purchase.

At public meetings, dinners and banquets John seemed invariably to be Chairman and his name in this capacity appeared many times in the "Southern Argus". In this newspaper on 13/8/1874 he thanked the residents of the district for their support for his first sale. He had become the town auctioneer and for a time farmed also. He was soon prominent as auctioneer at clearing sales at Belvidere, Angas Plains and Strathalbyn with many advertisements in the "Southern Argus". He apparently left the farm at Belvidere to his only son, another John, when the latter married as soon after he built on Lot 18 at the corner of Murray and Chapel Streets, Strathalbyn and continued this business on into the new century.

On 1/12/1881 Cheriton was chairman of the committee to arrange a banquet to be held on the 20th at the Institute Hall in honour of the passing of the railway Bill. He had been an enthusiastic supporter of the proposal to extend the railway from Adelaide from Mt Barker on to Strathalbyn. He also took the Chair at the banquet (gentlemen only of course). The menu consisted of oyster and mock turtle soup - lamb, turkey pigeon pie, sucking pig, roast chicken, York ham, goose, ox tongue, duckling, roast beef, saddle of mutton, with dressed salad. The sweet courses were - trifles, wine jelly, strawberry cream, meringues, lemon sponges, French pastries, rhubarb and gooseberry tart, cherries, walnuts, preserved fruits and olives followed by coffee. The wine list included - hock, sherry, champagne, claret, port, Foster's Ale, Guinness Porter, brandy, whisky, and aerated waters. If they did not all suffer bilious attacks next day it was not for a want of trying"!

DEATH: of Jane Cheriton (nee McLean). At her residence Murray Street, Strathalbyn on 10/10/1886 aged 56 years.

OBITUARY: in the "Southern Argus":

"The late Mrs Cheriton. It is with very deep regret that we have to announce the death of our highly esteemed townswoman, wife of Mr John Cheriton, J.P. at the comparatively early age of 56. Mrs Cheriton was a very early colonist having arrived in the "Navarino" in 1837 with her father, Mr Donald McLean and his family, she being the youngest daughter. Mr McLean with the late Mr William Rankine who took up the Strathalbyn survey and came to reside here about 1842 (error - 1841) - since which time Mrs Cheriton has lived here, her marriage to Mr Cheriton having taken place some 7 years later in November 1849. The deceased lady was not only the oldest resident here but one of the oldest colonists, one of the fast thinning ranks of those who came prior to 1840. She was always of a quiet and retiring nature but made many friends. and what plenty are unable to do, kept them until her death. She leaves behind her a mourning husband, a son and a daughter besides 6 grandchildren and 4 brothers and 4 sisters. The cause of death was cancer, a disease she had suffered from for several years and for which she underwent a very severe operation about two years ago, obtaining only temporary relief. She died at sunset on Sunday and the funeral took place on the following day when a very large procession of mourners followed her remains to their last earthly resting place, her death being a source of grief to a large circle of friends and relatives. We need scarcely say that deep sympathy is felt for the bereaved ones."

As the house was (and still is) on the corner of Murray and Chapel Streets it is referred to by both. Such as (from Nancy Gemmell's book) » In Chapel Street John Cheriton built a house, on leaving the farm at Belvidere, and canted on business as an auctioneer. Next to him lived H Bonnar. He continued as Chairman at many functions such as at the farewell banquet in 1890 when the Postmaster left. In the "Southern Argus" dated 20/6/1901 (when John was aged 72 it was announced that he was retiring from auctioneering).

16/8/1906: FOR SALE, at Strathalbyn corner of Murray and Chapel Streets, a most desirable residence, well built stone house, galvanised iron roof, contains ten rooms with cedar fittings, gas laid on, large verandah, underground and galvanised iron tanks, stabling for 8 horses, men's and chaff rooms, coach house and other outbuildings, garden with fruit trees and vines. - J. Cheriton.

The next owner was C. D. McFarlane (junior) and after that the Scott family. Where John lived next is not known to E.M.S. Both John and Matthew Rankine died in 1917 and in the "Southern Argus" Jottings column by J.W.E. he

wrote 1- "Mr Rankine and Mr Cheriton took a keen interest in this column and many times the former supplied me with information on subjects I wished to write about which happened before the publication of this paper, and as sometimes he was not fully acquainted with the particular matter for he lived away from the town for some years, he would occasionally be a little out in his facts, in which case my other living encyclopedia Mr Cheriton would chuckle and tell him that his memory was failing him. Sometimes vice-versa it would be Mr Cheriton who had given me a slightly incorrect version of a happening, and then it would be Mr Rankine's turn to laugh. "Silly old man, tell him it must be his memory that wants refreshing."

DEATH: Obituary from the "Southern Argus" -

"Mr John Cheriton who died in the Strathalbyn Private Hospital on Wednesday June 20th 1917 was aged 88 years. He was a Colonist of 68 years having arrived in S.A. at the age of 20. He followed farming at Belvidere for many years and for a term represented the old Mt Barker District in the House of Assembly. He first took up land at Belvidere in 1851 and later went to the Victorian goldfields. On his return he farmed and did auctioneering work. He was well known in the selling ring in Strathalbyn and many clearing sales were left in his hands. He left one son Mr John Chenton junior, who is still farming at the old property at Belvidere. For the latter part of his life Mr Cheriton lived in his house on Lot 18 Chapel St."

John was buried with Jane at the Strathalbyn Cemetery (and also a daughter). There is a pink marble cross above the grave. The inscriptions don't agree with burial records or newspaper notices. Jane's death is given as 14/10/1886 instead of the 10th, John's age as 90 when it was 88 and the year of daughter Susannah's death as 1903 when it was 1905.

Children :-

1. Christina Agnes Cheriton – born 22/9/1850 in Strathalbyn. Married David Tyler Henderson. [See biographies 5198](#)
2. Susannah Ann Cheriton – born 8/8/1852 at 'Field View Cottage', Belvidere. [See biography 5199.3](#)
3. John Cheriton – born 22/8/1854 at 'Field View Lodge', Belvidere. Married Milfred Jane McCord. [See biographies 5200](#)

Notes compiled 1992 for the Strathalbyn National Trust and Museum by E. M. Stephenson of 12 Murray Street, Strathalbyn, 5255.

- SOURCE : This biography is an extract from "The History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants" which was published in 1995 – page 518 to 521.
- 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.