

## Hugh (the younger) McLEAN & Margaret McLEAN, nee TANNAHILL

Biography as published in 1995

**HUGH McLEAN** baptised as Ewen McLean the same name as his oldest brother, (HUGH the YOUNGER) on 26/5/1836, the 10th & youngest child of Donald & Christina (nee (1836 - 1921) McPhee) McLean at Kilmallie, Argyllshire, Scotland.

He was aged 16 months when his family left Fort William for South Australia to arrive by the "Navarin0" on 6/12/1837. He was known within the family as "Hugh Little". In old age he said that his earliest recollection of Strathalbyn was of Hogmany (the Scottish New Year celebration & in those days far more important than Christmas) which was held on the site of the first Primary School not built until long after in 1880 above the Old Cemetery. The event Hugh recalled when he was perhaps four years of age had been presided over by Dr John Rankine (this was described in Hugh's early day reminiscences published in the "Southern Argus" newspaper).

There is very little recorded of Hugh Little who was still a minor when his father died in 1855. Father Donald's Will of 1846 - but with various Codicils - bequeathed part of his Adelaide Town acre fronting Hindley Street, (Allotment 1 to Hugh). If Hugh Little predeceased his father his share was to go to his brothers & sisters as Tennants in Common. In the event he was to outlive all his family. (His mother was aged 45 years when Hugh was born).

Hugh appeared in the S.A. Census of 1841 at Strathalbyn 8. "under 7 years of age". He would have been about 5 years by then.

In old Directories he is shown either as "farmer" or as "farm labourer". Prior to his marriage in 1862 - & approximately in 1857, he fathered a son by Ann McBain who seems to have been working as a maidservant for his mother. The child was named Donald, but whether McBain or McLean or even to be McSween, Ann's married name, there is no record as the child was not registered. He simply vanishes from the family archives. When his grandmother Christina McLean died in 1869 her Will showed how much she was disturbed over the wellbeing of this little boy. Her very first bequest was a provision for the care & education of this small Donald, who was by then about 12 years of age.

A McBain descendant, namely Terry Duggin of Payneham, S.A. has done much research of the missing Donald without any clear result. He did find that Ann McBain, daughter of Donald & Margaret (nee McLean) McBain was born at North Uist, Scotland in 1838. Donald McBain & his brother Norman were of Lake Plains, S.A. and each had a daughter Ann b. 1838. Hugh Little's Ann McBain eventually married on 30/11/1859 at Naracoorte. S.A. Charles McSween (b. 1840, Scotland, son of Allan McSween). Ann had arrived in S.A. in 1853 by HMS "Hercules".

Ann had several McSween children and died on 2/2/1912 at North Adelaide and was interred at West Terrace Cemetery. Her husband Charles McSween died 11/3/1912 at Peterborough, S.A. by committing suicide by drowning himself in a local horse trough and was buried in that town. However, Donald, son of Hugh Little, could not be traced.

**MARRIAGE:** on 13/4/1862 at Strathalbyn to **Margaret Tannahill** (b. about 1836 in England - daughter of Robert Tannahill). Hugh signed the certificate as "Ewen" his correct name & Margaret also signed. The eldest brother Allan McLean of "Meadowbank", Strathalbyn was a witness. The marriage "by Presbyterian rites" is presumed to have been at "Auchanada's" and no doubt Margaret had been another of Mrs McLean's helpers.

Until his marriage Hugh would have lived at his parent's house but afterwards there is mention of "Ardgour Cottage". Margaret's only known relative in S.A. was her sister Jemima Tannahill who was much younger and who

emigrated in 1865. Her occupation in the ship's manifest was "servant". She married a Mr Muir who was an American and went with him to live at Jacksonville (which state of U.S.A. is now known as there are several towns of the same name). She returned as a childless widow to live at Strathalbyn with her great niece Mrs Bertie Blunt c. 1928. She died at hospital at Parkside about 1934.

From the "Southern Argus" of 1/10/1918 and "Jottings" by the editor J. W. Elliott"

"Often in the Jottings the name of the old pioneer family of McLean has been mentioned. Of the original stock none remains but one survivor, Mr Hugh McLean (junior) who has resided here at Strathalbyn for the whole of the years that make up the history of the town & district.

I was chatting to this resident the other day & we counted up the last of those left in the south of the band of early settlers entitled to be called pioneers. The total aggregate to the sum of one, was Mr Hugh McLean who now alone survives of the original settlers, of this neighbourhood.

Now (in 1918) electricity lights up the Post Office at night & a man to whom Hugh was recently speaking 8. who arrived 75 years ago in 1846 mentioned that there was then no telegraph, no telephone & no railway. Meat was one shilling 8- sixpence per pound (i.e. 15 cents per half kilo), hard to get & often inedible. A single egg cost 2 shillings & 5 pence (25 cents) & was often the same. Butter was out of the question or 3 shillings & 9 pence (39 cents) per pound if not 4 shillings & 6 pence (45 cents) if available, which was rarely."

Ships carried jam, treacle & dripping which were staple appetisers of inferior quality. Flour sold at Colman's Mill, Strathalbyn, in 1846 for 5 pounds (\$10) per bag & beyond the incomes of the poorer arrivals.

By 1918 Adelaide could be reached in two hours. in contrast to the week by bullock dray in 1846. By 1994, 45 minutes by car is usual. Hugh "Little" had seen vast changes between 1841 & 1918.

As Hugh did not take a prominent part in town affairs very little concerning him appeared in print until 1919 as one of the oldest of the first settlers. On December 6th of that year the Children's Bridge in the park 8 over the river Angas was officially opened. This was a gift to the town by Mr William Richardson as a memorial to his wife & he asked Hugh to lead the procession across with 300 children and many residents following. A "sumptuous repast" followed according to the "Southern Argus".

DEATH: On 6/4/1891 of Hugh's wife Margaret at Strathalbyn at the comparatively early age of 48 years. She was buried with her young children & Hugh the Elder (and later Hugh Little joined her) in grave 1/82 at the Strathalbyn Cemetery.

DEATH: of Hugh the Younger on 5/6/1921 at Strathalbyn aged 85 years although this date was erroneously published as 89 years.

OBITUARY: "Southern Argus" dated 9/6/1921.

"The death of Mr Hugh McLean which took place suddenly on Sunday last, removes from our midst the last of the pioneers of the district & takes from our little community, one of its most interesting personalities. Mr McLean arrived in South Australia in the latter part of 1836 (error - 1837) with his parents & uncles, (error - his brothers & sisters). He was then about 4 years of age (error - he was 2 by then). With the Rankine family the McLeans came to this district pioneering the settlement here 8- ever since that far back day he continued to reside in the place, all the rest of the family having scattered abroad. His father made his home where Mr F. W. Allison now resides, the two storey building being for a long time the most pretentious structure in the district & on this spot Mr McLean & his brothers & sisters grew up to maturity. (Note by E.M.S., his eldest brother Allen was 25 years his senior). When the exodus to the north set in, early in the 1870s, the McLeans dispersed & the farms on the Milang Road & "Meadow Bank" estate where old Allan McLean ruled, passed into other hands. Mr Hugh McLean however, stuck to the old town 8 through all the changing years. Lived a quiet life here, if a hard working one for most of the time.

Some little time ago he met with an accident by which a broken arm was caused, but though of very advanced age, he made a capital recovery & appeared good for many years of life yet. He was about as usual on Sunday but was taken ill suddenly & died almost immediately of heart failure following the attack. His remains were laid to rest in the Strathalbyn Cemetery on Tuesday, the Rev. G. C. Love conducting the service in the presence of a number of old friends. The late Mr McLean leaves a family of four sons & two daughters. His age was about 89 years (error - 85)"

Record of burials in grave 1/82 at Strathalbyn:

1. Hugh McLean, the elder on 1/6/1876 aged 63 years.
2. Jane Ann, daughter of Hugh the younger on 30/12/1878 aged 2 years 2 months.
3. Jemima A. daughter of Hugh the younger on 11/3/1879 aged 6 months.
4. James McLean, son of Christina (Mrs Keough) on 13/3/1890 aged 5 years.
5. Margaret McLean, wife of Hugh the younger on 8/4/1891 aged 48 years.
6. Hugh the Younger on 7/6/1921 aged 89 (error - 85 years).

The above are burial not actual death dates.

Children :-

1. Christina McPhee McLean – born 17/4/1863 at Strathalbyn. Married James Stanley Keough. [See biographies 5204](#)
2. Margaret McLean - born 13/4/1864 at Strathalbyn. DIED: at the age of 5. Burial not recorded. At this same time, Hugh McLean of the ship "Tomatin" of 1840 & his wife Elizabeth (nee Scott) were staying at "Ardgour Cottage". Strathalbyn, with Hugh the Younger & Margaret. According to a "Register" newspaper of Adelaide a little daughter of Elizabeth & this particular Hugh McLean, died at "Ardgour Cottage" on 23/7/1864. She was named Mary and was aged 2 years & 2 months. This has caused some confusion concerning the deaths of the two infants. The Hugh of the "Tomatin" must certainly have been kin to the Strathalbyn McLeans, but certainly not a third son of Donald & Christina, named Hugh.
3. Robert Tannahill McLean – 29/1/1865 at Strathalbyn. Married Sophia Henrietta Somers. [See biographies 5212.3](#)
4. Hugh McLean – born 5/10/1866 at Strathalbyn. [See biography 5214](#)
5. John James Frazer McLEAN – 1/8/1968 at Strathalbyn. [See biography 5215](#)
6. David McLean – born 1/6/1870 at Strathalbyn. Marriage Elizabeth Emma Curnow. [See biographies 5216](#)
7. Jeff McLean – born 7/2/1873 at Strathalbyn. [See biographies 5217](#)
8. Elizabeth Ann McLean – born 9/12/1874 at Strathalbyn. Married Matthew Johnston. [See biographies 5218](#)
9. Jane Ann McLean – born 29/1/1877 at Strathalbyn, registered as 'Jeanine'. Died on 30/12/1878 aged almost two years. She was interred in the family plot at the Strathalbyn Cemetery infancy
10. Jemima Adam Tannahill McLean - b. 3/8/1876 at Strathalbyn. Died on 10/3/1879 aged 7 months. She was also interred in the family plot at the Strathalbyn Cemetery.

- SOURCE : This biography is an extract from "The History of Donald & Christina McLean and Their Descendants" which was published in 1995 – page 532 to 568.
- 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.