

FROM LAGGAN TO ARTHUR'S CREEK

The McDonald family history
and connections with
The Draper family, Charnwood



Written and presented by
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Front Cover

The McDonald family at *Glen Donald* Arthur's Creek at circa 1906

Left to right: Donald, Alice, Ruby, Susan (Underwood), Jane, John Henry, Christina, John McDonald (husband of Susan), John Herbert, Emily Herbert (nee McDonald) baby William (Jack) Herbert, Harold.

Photograph taken circa: 1906. Courtesy: Marion (White), Harold and Edna McDonald

PREFACE:

Our Australianness and the geographical remoteness from our country of origin arouses a curiosity and yearning for getting in touch with our roots. Early in my life I developed a strong interest in family history.

This was fostered by the many stories told to me by my family. My father and his brothers and sisters captivated and delighted me with their first-hand accounts of family members and events.

When I lived in France in the mid 1970s, I started to research my family history by travelling to the countries of my ancestors. I made trips to Scotland for the McDonald Clan, to England for the Draper family (Shepshed) and to the battlefields of the Somme where Harold Underwood McDonald is buried. My endeavour over the years has led me on a journey full of discoveries, surprises and meetings with wonderful people.

I also have the good fortune to live in the area where my ancestors made their first steps on Australian soil, where it all started to take place, namely - Yan Yean, Eltham, Kangaroo Ground and Arthur's Creek. This facilitated the research by talking to people who live here, by visiting museums and making photo-safaris to their former properties. My sister Maree married into a pioneer orchardist family (Apted) who live in Arthur's Creek. They are a strong part of the community and thus the connection with the area is kept vibrant.



I am writing this history also for my children, Hugh and Sonja, so that they are aware of their roots and proud of their heritage. The knowledge about the characters and lives of their ancestors can become part of their identity.

I would like to thank my family - my wife Gertraud and my children Hugh and Sonja for encouraging and supporting me in writing this story. My sincere thanks goes to all family members who have contributed to this history.

Front: Pat and Roy McDonald
Back: Hugh, Sonja, Gertraud and Ross McDonald

INTRODUCTION

Within families there is often a feeling of unfinished business if the background of the family history is not captured, preserved and handed on to future generations.

With this in mind, this compendium has been put together tracing the McDonald and Draper family history - the paternal and maternal branches of my family. These two families have much in common – pioneers at Arthur's Creek, farmers, orchardists or horticulturalists, who had large families, impressive properties and who did well in the new Colony of Victoria. The spouses of both families have invariably been the "anchor and the rock" assisting their partners to undertake fulfilling and meaningful lives and along the way, raise successful families.

At the last count, there were well over 100 descendants from the Julie Draper / John Henry McDonald line.

This compendium does not aspire to be a seamless or systematic chronological narrative of the McDonald or Draper family. It is more a compilation of anecdotes and accounts and memories. It is an interpretive story rather than a chronology of step by step historical facts. It tries to integrate the historical background of the time, so as to give the flavour of the period.

Already a considerable amount of this history has been gathered from various sources by family members. I am drawing on this well of information. My intention is to make a contribution, along with others, so that it can be handed on and further embellished.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On the McDonald side, Pam Goodey, daughter of Evan and Dot McDonald, is in the process of researching the McDonald, Underwood and Draper families and plans are well under way to finalise her excellent and detailed research. Pam's work will be a major resource for the knowledge about our family. Valerie Peels, daughter of Stan Ward, (descendent of Jane Elizabeth McDonald) has also assisted with valuable family research as has Athol McDonald, with his extensive knowledge of Laggan in Scotland. Vin Underwood has undertaken significant research on the Underwood family and is working with Pam Goodey to fill in some gaps.

The McDonald family has provided important information and anecdotes. My parents Roy and Pat provided insight and much inspiration, as have my uncles and aunts, and their children.

On the Draper family side, input and assistance has been received from Bruce Draper, a great-grandson of Charles Draper. He has provided considerable information on Charles Draper, much of which has been incorporated here.

Bruce's father, the late Chester Draper (1905-1998) had a marvellous memory into his 90's and a wealth of knowledge of Arthur's Creek and the Draper family, some of which has also been included in this history.

Barbara Stephenson has also given the history depth. Barbara is a great grand-daughter of Charles Draper and has been able to trace Charles Draper's line back about five generations into Nottingham, and Catherine Chester's line back seven generations.

This introductory history, along with contributions from other relatives, has provided the catalyst for a big family reunion, and a means of making contact with our extensive wider family beyond the John McDonald Jr. line. Plans are underway for a get together at the venue where much of our history centred, The Mechanics Institute, Arthur's Creek, Victoria.