

William Smith Mackenzie - BIOGRAPHY

- SUMMARY -

Date of birth: 26 October 1885

Where born: Balmuildy Cottage, Western District of Cadder,
Scotland (7km north of Glasgow)

Father: Daniel Mackenzie (Colliery Manager) – b 9/03/1850, d 11/12/1936
Mother: Agnes Stevenson Mackenzie (nee Smith) – b 1859, d 1/09/1938

Siblings: Daniel Campbell - b 1881, d 21/02/1886 from TB meningitis
Charlotte Augusta Campbell - b 1884, d 12/06/1971
David Clow - b November 1888, d 27/08/1889 at sea
Margaret Campbell - b 1894, d 29/06/1977
Ian Montague - b 13/06/1897, d 6/10/1929

Emigration to Australia: August 1889 aboard the *ss Loch Ness*.

Marriage: to Rita Shewring Heriot
on 11 November 1914
at Thornbury, VIC

Children: Rita Jean Heriot Mackenzie – b 1915, d 4/06/2003
Donald Montague Mackenzie – b 26/09/1917, d 17/10/1998
Marjorie Winifred Mackenzie – b 10/07/1919, d 6/11/1998

Died: 25 April 1963 at Neerim Rd, Murrumbidgee, VIC
Cause of death: Heart attack
Buried: St Kilda Cemetery, Dandenong Rd, St Kilda East

Birth in Scotland:

William Smith Mackenzie (known as “Will”) was born in 1885 in Cadder, a village 7km north of Glasgow.

His father, Daniel Mackenzie, was a colliery manager – the youngest certificated manager in the west of Scotland.

Two of Daniel’s sisters, Janet and Elizabeth, emigrated to Australia in the early-mid 1880’s, citing health reasons

Daniel married Agnes Stevenson Smith 25/10/1880, and in 1886 their first child (also named Daniel) died aged 4 ½ years from tuberculous (TB) meningitis.

Emigration with parents and family:

In August 1889, Daniel and Agnes emigrated to Australia with their 3 children – Charlotte, Will and David (who died aged 9 months on the voyage). The family hasn't recorded the reasons for emigration, but with 2 sisters already in Australia and the death of their first child from TB meningitis, it is likely that they were attracted by the healthier life being promoted in Australia with a much lower incidence of TB, when compared to cold, industrial and polluted Glasgow where at least 1 in 4 deaths were from TB.

Parents settle in Outtrim, Gippsland:

The family first went to Ballarat which was a bustling gold mining city, then moved to Gippsland after Daniel obtained employment as mine manager at the Coalville Colliery, south of Moe. This mine had poorer quality black coal, and it is likely that Daniel saw much better prospects in Outtrim where high grade black coal was obtained from mines which had opened in 1894. In 1896, Daniel & family moved to Outtrim after the Outtrim, Howitt and Consolidated Coal Company appointed him mine manager, a position he held until the Outtrim mines closed in 1916. After the closure of Outtrim, Daniel was mine manager in nearby Jumbunna for a further 18 months before his retirement. He then moved to Mandeville Cres, Toorak, and later to Neerim Rd, Murrumbeena near his daughter Charlotte and her husband, artist Montague Brown (noting that at the time of Charlotte's wedding to Montague Brown on 25/10/1927, the address of Charlotte and witness Daniel Mackenzie is recorded as Mandeville Cres, Toorak, Vic).

Education:

Will was educated at Scotch College, Melbourne, where he was a boarder for 4 years from 1899-1902.

Employment:

After leaving school, he qualified as an accountant, and was employed as a Bank Officer with the Colonial Bank (now National Australia Bank). Whilst in Kyneton, Victoria, he met Rita Shewring Heriot, the only daughter of Mr & Mrs John Martin Heriot. They joined the Kyneton Choral Society in the early 1900's and won many prizes as soloists and with duets.

Marriage:

Will and Rita married on 11/11/1914 at Thornbury, then moved and settled in Traralgon where he became Bank Manager and had 3 children – Rita Jean Heriot (1915), Donald Montague (1917), and Marjorie Winifred (1919).

Traralgon:

Will and Rita were both active in the Traralgon Presbyterian Church where he conducted the church choir, later formed the Morwell Choral Society, also a school children's choir which won many trophies, and taught singing to a number of private singing pupils.

Holidays at Inverloch:

Will's father, Daniel Mackenzie, had a holiday house at Inverloch, just a short walk to the wide sandy beach with safe swimming area, and for many years Will would drive the family down to Inverloch to spend the school holidays.

First car:

In 1926, Will purchased his first car (needed for the drive to Inverloch). One evening, he took the family outside to see "something special" - a new Chevrolet. His daughter, Rita Jean, asked him how he got the car home. Will replied, "the salesman said you just do this, and you do that, and so on, so I just got in and drove it home!" This was apparently typical on Will, who drove a car for the rest of his life (37 years) without accident.

Real Estate business and the Great Depression:

In the 1920s (? late), Will left the Bank and bought into a Real Estate business in Traralgon. Later, in 1932, he bought a business in nearby Morwell, and the family moved there.

With the tough economic times of the 1930's Great Depression, it was hard to be successful in real estate and business, and the family always said that Will should have stayed in the Bank.

Children's careers:

During the 1930s, Will's children finished their education and began careers.

Rita Jean completed her Leaving at Traralgon HS about 1931, after which she attended Melbourne Business College and returned to the family business.

Donald Montague attended Melbourne HS for his Leaving year in 1934, and then joined the Bank of NSW (now Westpac) in 1935.

Marjorie Winifred went to Yallourn HS after the family moved to Morwell, and completed her Leaving about 1936, then trained as a nurse at the Alfred Hospital.

Parent's deaths:

Will's father Daniel Mackenzie died on 11/12/1936 at age 86.

The address on his death certificate is noted to be 540 Neerim Rd, Murrumbena, whilst at the time of his daughter Charlotte's marriage to Montague Brown on 25/10/1927 Daniel's address on the marriage certificate is Mandeville Crescent, Toorak.

So at some time after 25/10/1927, Daniel and his wife Agnes have moved from Toorak to live in their old age close to their daughter Charlotte (a trained nurse) and her husband Montague at 530 Neerim Rd, Murrumbena.

Will's mother, Agnes, died on 1/09/1938 at age 79.

Montague Brown (Charlotte's husband/ Will's bother-in-law) died on 24/12/1942.

Moving homes:

Margaret Campbell Mackenzie (the unmarried daughter of Daniel and Agnes) then moved from 540 to 530 Neerim Road to be with her widowed sister Charlotte instead of both living alone, whilst Will and Rita move from Morwell to the vacated home at 540 Neerim Rd, Murrumbena.

During WW2, Will worked in a Government office in the City of Melbourne, and later worked in real estate again until retirement aged about 70 (around 1956). Throughout this time, he continued to teach singing to pupils at his home.

Will's daughter, Rita Jean, also moved from Morwell with her parents and lived with them at 540 Neerim Rd. She continued her singing and piano, winning scholarships for 2 years to the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, and singing with the National Opera Company. She also completed a Chiropody Diploma in 1951, and set up a private practice at 540 Neerim Rd (after renovations). She married Maurice Claude Kelly on 20/06/1959, and then moved from 540 Neerim Rd to their own new home built in Mt Waverley.

Will's death:

Will died at home on ANZAC Day 25/04/1963 at age 77, following a sudden heart attack.

Prior to this, he had lived a very healthy life without illness.

After his death, his wife, Rita, moved to live with her daughter, Rita Jean, and her husband, Maurice, at Mt Waverley.

Memories of Grandpa's magic:

Will's grandchildren remember Grandpa Mackenzie driving his car (Wolseley) and teaching singing in his home, but most of all his magic tricks: card tricks, slight of hand, everything, but especially making coins and things disappear, and then finding them behind the children's ears or in their pockets.