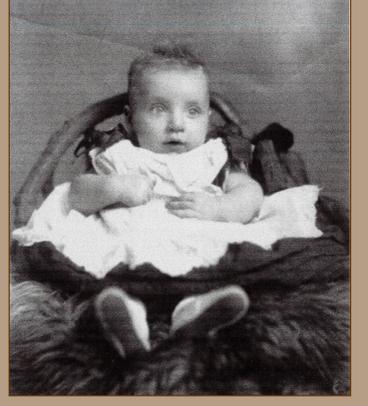


ROY W McCREANOR



Roy William McCreanor was born in Adelaide on 16th February, 1881 to Thomas and Sarah Pepper. Tom was a wanderer and the family lived in various places over the years including Adelaide, Jamestown and even tried his luck at the goldfields in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. Sarah with two young children and pregnant, made the long journey to join him, their third child was born in the goldfields. They never made their fortune searching for gold and by the birth of their fourth child, the family was living in Adelaide again. Sarah was to bear 12 children but sadly lost two as babies.

When land was opened for allotment in Berri on the River Murray in 1911, Thomas applied for and received one of the first fruit blocks. By this time his older sons including Roy were teenagers and were able to help with the work. Roy enlisted in the Australian Military Forces on the 14th June 1915 at age 23, serving as a Private in the 10th Infantry Battalion. In July 1916 whilst fighting in France, Roy received a gun shot wound to the arm and was removed to a hospital in Newcastle, England for recuperation. In January 1917 whilst in Monte Video, Roy was caught out overstaying his leave after 6pm, and as a consequence, forfeited two days pay! He was discharged from Military Service on 20th June 1917, medically unfit to sever after two years and seven days enlisted.

Roy and Gladys Dreyer were married in Adelaide on 27th February 1919. They returned home to live on the Soldier Settler block he was allocated in August 1918. Roy's time spent working on his father's fruit block and Berri Experimental Orchard as a young man had given him the experience required to plant and manage his own fruit block, one of the first three properties allocated at Monash under the Scheme. It would have been gruelling work, grubbing, clearing and planting with assistance only of horses and clearing equipment. Sited at Block 443 along Jury Road near Monash and it was here they lived almost all of their lives.

By 1919 Roy had a thriving fruit block with just over 400 trees, including oranges, apricots, peaches, nectarines, plums, pears, apples, almonds and figs along with 16 acres of grape vines. The almonds would have been a beautiful sight in spring, planted in 1920 as a windbreak all around the property. Roy also grew wheat for hay and an acres of lucerne for his and others' horses and cows. The property boasted a concrete walled, wood and iron roof two roomed home in 1918, along with brush stables, an underground tank, fencing and channelling.

Roy purchased his neighbour's property which then gave him enough land to afford a permanent employee. Like many fruit property owners over the years, Roy employed one of the newly arriving migrants, coming to Australia from Yugoslavia and other areas of Europe. They brought farming skills with them and were valuable assets to the blockers.

Roy and Gladys created a large family with the birth of seven children. Misfortune came with the death of their first child at just a few weeks old. Six more children followed, Louis, Brian, Eileen (Quirke), Robert, Terence, Patricia (Jury). Many of the descendants of these children continue to make the Riverland their home today.

Roy was active in the Berri and Monash communities, serving for a time on the Board of both the Co-op Dried Fruit Packaging Shed and the Berri Co-op Winery and Distillery. The Monash library was also a big interest for him and the now long closed Roy McCreanor Juvenile Library in the Monash Hall was named in his honour. Roy McCreanor and his family were devout Catholics and for a time the Monash Catholic Community held mass in the McCreanor home at Monash. Roy and his family were large contributors to the early congregation and also in the fundraising to enable a Church to be built in Berri. Roy was also a representative to the Advisory Board of the Irrigation Department at Berri and the Monash Model Parliament, (prior to the Berri Council being formed in 1922) and a Committee member of the Monash RSL.

Roy and Gladys were very active and loved throughout the district with Gladys a mother to all. When a bed was needed for the night by family, friends or a visiting Catholic priest, all were welcomed. Roy's death from a sudden heart attack just after Christmas, 28 December 1952 and aged sixty-one was a shock to his family and to the whole of the district. After Roy died, their son Brian lived with his mother in their old home, eventually the original block was sold and Brian moved onto the adjoining property, bought in the early days by Roy and lived in over the years by most of his children at some time. Gladys died at Loxton at the home of her daughter in 1960.

R.S.L. Annual Meeting At Monash

Monash, March 2.
The annual meeting of the Monash Sub-branch of the R.S.L. was held in the RAOB Hall, when Mr. R. W. McCreanor presided over an attendance of seventy members.

In his annual report, the president referred to the future plans of the Sub-branch, which included the building of club-rooms on property facing the Remark-Morgan road. A substantial amount was already in hand for this purpose.

Officers elected were: President, Mr. R. W. McCreanor; vice-president, Mr. F. H. Nixon; secretary, Mr. F. H. Cocks; treasurer, Mr. J. N. Morrison; auditors, Messrs. A. B. Mortimer and L. H. Madsen; committee, Messrs. L. L. Ellaway, A. J. Soderberg, J. H. Millington, E. R. Whitelaw, A. J. Smith, A. Harvey, E. A. Jury, V. Harris and G. P. Fisher.

Miss Dawn Edwards, of Berri, has been the guest of Mr. and Mrs. M. C. Rowan for three weeks.—Mr. Michael Heath has returned to the city to commence an engineering course at the 'Variety'.

Doortakings amounted to £32/10/- at the dance in the Memorial Hall on Saturday evening. Mr. Stan Dyer was MC, and Mrs. Harris and Mrs. Hunt were door-keepers.

