

# GEORGE HARRIS



Thomas George Harris known as “George”, was the fourth of five children, born in Adelaide on 22nd August 1884 to Charles and Adelaide Harris. At age 34, in September 1919, George married Alice Smith, 30 in Christ Church in North Adelaide.

In 1915 at age 30, George enlisted and served with the 9th Light Horse Regiment 11 to 14 Reinforcements from October 1915 to February 1916.

On discharge and return to South Australia, George took up soldier settler Blocks 441 and 607 on Lobban Road, near Monash, in 1918. The property was directly above the very noted “Lone Gum” of which Lone Gum and Monash had begun its township under.

The property George was allocated and leased from the State Government, consisted of 14 irrigable acres on the bottom side of Lobban Road and 18 dry acres on the top side. It was a red sandy loam soil, perfect for planting fruit trees and a vineyard.

In 1918 clearing of the land had begun and a 10,000 gallon water tank constructed. Sixteen chains of vermin proof fencing had been erected and a thirty one chain lime and concrete water channel laid. Fruit trees and vines had been planted, totalling 2¾ acres of trees, 10¾ acres of vines and a half acre of fodder. Plantings were mostly oranges and a few mixed trees and currants, doradilla and sultana grapes.

By October 1920 the block was growing well. They had 110 orange trees, 60 apricot and 60 peach trees with a variety of other fruit trees here and there along with 12½ acres of vineyards. They also had some livestock, two horses, one milking cow and 17 chickens in the yard.

About 2 miles west of George’s block, there had been reported problems with salt, meaning plantings, especially vines were not thriving in the soil. A number of other soldier settlement fruit blocks further over in the district part of Glossop, near Winkie, weren’t doing so well due to salt problems too. Sadly, many of these “blockers” had to walk off their properties due to the salt in the soil.

Between 1919 and 1921, a 4 roomed concrete residence was built along with brush stables. The house was needed because in 1921 George and Alice’s first child was born, a son Victor Leslie, followed by daughter Margaret Jean in 1923. Then in 1924 another son Wilfred John (Bill) added to the family.

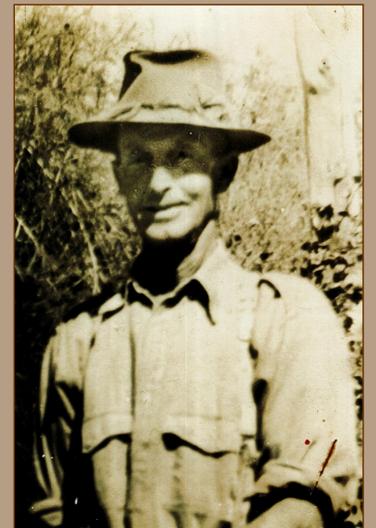
Bill, his wife Lil and some of their five children continue to live in Berri today. Bill was a very active community member, involved in many businesses and committees in Berri. Margaret left the area when she married a farmer and moved away to the South East of South Australia and sadly Victor passed away very young from a tumour, leaving a wife and small child.

George lived and worked on Block 441 on Lobban Road for many years, passing away from a heart attack in 1942 at the relatively young age of 56. Alice lived on the property for many more years, actively involved in the community assisting with Girl Guides, Red Cross and the Anglican Church. She passed away in 1983 at the age of 94.

## SIX MONTHS JAIL FOR CAR THIEF

### Three for “Passenger”

Stanley George Brady and William Ernest Bartlett were charged with unlawfully using a motor vehicle. They pleaded not guilty. M.C. Merrett, who prosecuted, said that on Saturday George Harris of Monash parked his car near the Berri bowling greens. About 6 p.m. it was taken without the owner's permission and later recovered near the Berri Distillery, where it had been driven into a fence. Bartlett was found hiding in a bush on a nearby block, and Brady had been arrested some time later. George Harris said he had seen his car driven for a short distance from the bowling greens in an easterly direction, turned and driven at high speed back along the road towards the town. He could not identify the occupants and had not given anyone permission to take the car.



George at home in Monash

## OBITUARY

### Mr. George Harris, Prominent Monash Citizen

Mr. George Harris of Monash, who died suddenly on Tuesday, September 15, came to the Berri district from Western Australia in 1911 to join his brother, Mr. Charles Harris, who had arrived the previous year and had taken up a property on the flat, which they developed and bought into production. After the outbreak of Great War I George Harris enlisted in the 9th Light Horse, later transferring to the 3rd Machine Gun Company and saw active service in Palestine. He held the rank of sergeant. On returning to Berri he decided to take up a property for himself, and settled at Monash. When the Returned Soldiers' League sub-branch was formed at Monash he was one of the first members, and had been on the committee, except for the last two years, the whole time. At one time he held the office of president. He took an active part in all movements to further the interests of the settlers, being particularly active on the Cost of Blocks Committee, and Drainage Committee. He was amongst other interests, a member of the Advisory Board for about six years, the Distillery Board, Monash New Hall Committee, and School Committee. He also took a keen interest in bowls, being a member of the Berri Bowling Club, where he met with a good measure of success in tournaments. One of his hobbies was fishing, and whenever opportunity offered he would be busy with rod and line. Mr. Harris leaves a wife, two sons, L.A.C. Vic. Harris (R.A.A.F.) and William J. Harris (who was a student at Roseworthy Agricultural College but has latterly been home to assist with the work on the fruit block), and a daughter, Mrs. Densley, of Keith. There are three brothers, Messrs. Charles (Adelaide), Ted (Hamilton Downs Station) via Alice Springs) and Fred (Tennant Creek). On two occasions the deceased made visits to Ted and Fred up north.



Alice at home in Monash