

North Descendants History Book

ROSE NORTH

29 May 1903 - 16th November 1988





Rose NORTH was born at Newland Grange, Colton, on the Eyre Peninsula of South Australia, on 29 May 1903, the 9th of 11 children, and the fifth daughter of Hero Clare NORTH and his wife Rosina Ann (BOYLAN). She was one of a quartet of girls at the end of the family and so was separated in age from her 3 older sisters by between 10 and 14 years. Partly because of this age difference, it is probably fair to assume that Rose was closer to the other three members of the quartet, particularly her next older sister Mary and her next younger sister Cecilia. Indeed Cecilia, and her husband Russell WOMERSLEY, were later to be witnesses at her wedding, and the only family members present. However all the sisters were enthusiastic letter writers and so remained in regular contact with each other throughout their lives.



Rose grew up at Newland Grange and followed her older siblings in attending Colton school. She used to reminisce about having to walk the distance to and from school each day – a practice that was not uncommon in those days. She had happy memories of her grandfather George and remembered being bounced on his knee as a small child while he recited the Greek alphabet to her. She also remembered that when George and Lydia got older and relinquished the running of Newland Grange to their son Hero, they moved from the main house to a cottage on the property. As he got older George started to wander away from home and try to head towards the nearby sea – something that could be quite dangerous given the cliffs in the area - so Monica, one of the older sisters, was sent to stay with her grandparents to help out and keep an eye on George. However, because Mon got nervous there, Cecilia was then sent to help Mon

and keep her company. Rose talked of growing up on the farm where there was plenty of meat and dairy products but little in the way of fresh fruit and vegetables in the diet, due to the poor soil at Newland Grange.

There were other advantages to growing up on a farm however, especially for an athletic young lady like Rose who could run like the wind and in fact did so around the property whenever she got the chance. She enjoyed the freedom of open spaces, and given the opportunity may well have been a strong contender for the Olympics. Fences were a magnet for her; she could hurdle a normal fence in her stride without any hesitation to pause and reflect on the height of the obstacle in her way. She was a natural with horses too and could jump on a mare and go bare-back riding, challenging one of her brothers to a race which she often won.

A great talent for music ran in the family as well. 'All the Norths are musical' Rose used to say, and certainly Rose herself had that gift. She could play the piano by ear and be just as relaxed accompanying visiting performers as playing the piano for a family sing-along in the evenings. If the church was short of an organist, Rose could step in and play the church organ for the choir, a considerable skill but one that Rose took in her stride.



After leaving school Rose went to Adelaide and studied to become a teacher. She initially taught around South Australia and was teaching at Dixon State School in 1922. By 1923 she had moved to Tasmania where her older sister Monica and Monica's husband Noel DOWDEN lived. Monica asked her to move down to help her when she had her second child that year. Rose taught in various locations near Hobart including Elderslie in 1923, and Cairns Bay in 1924. In 1925 she moved to Victoria and had a post at Donnybrook, near her sister Cecilia.

A flair for art and design seemed to go hand-in-hand with her aptitude for music. Rose could pick up a handful of chalks in the classroom and cover the blackboard with a leafy rainforest, colourful birds, pixies and elves and exotic blooms. She was an energetic person with a

wide range of interests and an active, enquiring mind. She was well versed in the politics of the day and held a keen interest in religion, endeavouring to apply fundamental Christian principles in her day-to-day living.

Rose met her future husband William John HOLTON in 1925 while working in Donnybrook, and they were married on 12th June 1926 at St Mary's Catholic Church, Dandenong. Bill was the son of first and second generation Irish immigrants. He was born in Carlton, an inner suburb of Melbourne, the eldest of 5 children, and left school early to help support the family when his father became ill, dying when Bill was 17.

Bill joined the Victorian Rail Service and by 1920 was working in Rainbow, before being transferred to Digger's Rest in 1921. By January 1924 he was Assistant Station Master at Meredith - where his claim to fame was that he won an Ugly Man Competition in March 1925 as a fund raiser for the local tennis club after raising £110.00 in 6 weeks. He transferred to Guildford later in 1925, and was promoted to Station Master, Donnybrook by 1929.



Rose and Bill had 4 daughters – Lesley Helene, Catherine Marie, Mary Juletta and Mardie Therese (christened Margaret). They later adopted Bill's niece Helena SHORT (Helen HOLTON) in about 1960 after her parent's deaths. When the children were young Rose visited her relatives in South Australia as often as she could. She was very family-conscious and made sure her children grew up fully aware of their Greek heritage of which she was rightfully very proud.

The family lived in Melbourne during the 1930s. Their house in Middle Brighton had an orchard in the backyard, with many fruit and almond trees. Later they moved to Belmore Road in Balwyn which was a very new suburb at that time. There they had a modern brick home with lush green lawns and a magnificent garden of

flowering shrubs and hydrangeas decorating the entrance to the front door. Added to her many talents Rose possessed a 'green thumb' and everywhere they lived her gardens

flourished and grew to lush proportions.



By 1941 they had moved to Cobden, in the western district of Victoria, where Bill worked as Shire Secretary of the Heytesbury Shire – a big job in a very large Shire - and Rose taught at Cobden State School. Bill

had applied to join the RAAF. He had done some training with them, but was deemed to be in a reserved occupation, so he remained in Cobden until early 1945 when the previous Shire Secretary returned from World War II. The family then returned to Melbourne where Bill took up a job at The Department of Works as an Expenditure Control Clerk.



Not long afterwards, however, the Heytesbury Shire Secretary position again became available so Bill returned to Cobden, while Rose remained teaching in Melbourne. Eventually she rejoined Bill and resumed teaching at the Cobden State School.

Bill and Rose remained in Cobden until Bill's retirement in March 1966 when they moved to the Gold Coast in Queensland. There they

bought and managed Chevron Flats in Old Burleigh Rd, Surfers Paradise where they lived happily for 4 or 5 years. They finally sold Chevron Flats in order to cruise around the world. On one such overseas trip Rose and Bill stopped off in Cyprus to visit their daughter, Mardie, who was at that time stationed in Nicosia on assignment with the United Nations. On another cruise they stopped off in Europe to tour Ireland, trying to track down Bill's Irish relatives. In the early 1900s most of Bill's father's siblings had emigrated to the United States of America and Bill's father alone took the long journey out to Australia to start a new life. For some years the family corresponded sporadically but after a while they lost touch.



When Rose and Bill's cruising days were over they returned to the Gold Coast and took up residence in Surfers Paradise, once more managing holiday units. Their last residence there was called Bundeena Flats and was situated on the Gold Coast Highway, a site which is now occupied by Q1, the Gold Coast's tallest building. Opposite Bundeena at that time was the Catholic Church and Primary school and Rose became quite involved in church activities.



It must be said here that Bill had always been a good sportsman, starting with tennis in his younger days then moving on to the game of golf. However in his later years he took up lawn bowls and literally became a champion, winning a desk full of trophies plus meat trays, roasting chickens and turkeys for the holidays. He thoroughly enjoyed his lawn bowls and his success at the game, and was an extremely popular figure down at the Surfers Paradise Bowls Club, being elected President of the Club for some time.

In 1980 Rose and Bill moved to Brisbane to live with Lesley, their eldest daughter, her husband John BARTLETT, and their family. Although they remained well for several years Bill's health started to deteriorate after a series of minor strokes. He died on 22nd August 1986. Rose remained at Lesley's home, apart from a short stay at Madonna Villa Nursing Home just before she died on 16th November 1988 at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. Both Rose and Bill are buried at the Allambe Garden of Memories on the Gold Coast at Broadbeach, a beautiful lawn cemetery with a magnificent view and excellent feng shui.

Lesley and John lived on in Brisbane – where John worked as an Engineer with Hornibrooks - until John's untimely death. Lesley and their five children continue to live in Brisbane, all with interesting careers to their credit, and most of the grandchildren remain in Queensland as well. Catherine, Rose's second daughter, married John NEGUS from Perth. When they first met, John owned and operated an electronics business in Darwin but after the family relocated to Perth they ran a successful electronics business together for many years until their retirement. Cathie and John both passed away in recent years but their three children and families now live in Brisbane, Perth and Denmark. Mary and Mardie, Rose's youngest daughters, were the travelers in the family; they left Australia to see the world and didn't return to take up residence again until many years had passed. Mary married John WOJCISON, an American, both of whom have sadly died. Mardie married an Englishman Richard CLEAVE and they live happily in Queensland.

So from Rose and Bill's chance meeting all those years ago their extended family number about three dozen people and counting, all living happy lives and ever thankful for that memorable day way back in 1925 when Rose met Bill.

ENDS

Written and researched by Mardie Holton-Cleave

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