

# DR. JOHN MCNAUGHTON

By Ken McNaughton

I was born and raised in Melbourne, left in 1964 at the age of 23, traveled extensively in Europe and the United States, and made my first return visit to Melbourne in 1983, staying at my parents' house at 16 Adrian Street, Burwood.



**Figure 1. The University of Edinburgh Medical School on Teviot Place in 1884.**

In the twenty years away I was not able to find out much about my great great grandfather, John Ross McNaughton, who left Scotland in 1838 and started our Australian McNaughton dynasty. I communicated with other members of the family but no one had more information, apart from the fact that John returned to Scotland in 1874 with his wife for the purpose of his health and to educate his youngest son Colin in Edinburgh for a medical career.

Just before I left Melbourne to return to my home in the USA, I found on the front porch at Adrian Street two copper-colored metal cylinders, both with the number 19 inked on the bottom. One was 15-1/2 inches long and 1-7/8 in. diameter and had a label with “McNaugh(ton)” written in ink in an immature hand and a bold “J” inscribed to the left. The other was 16 in. long and 1-3/4 in. diameter and had a large “J” scratched on the top. There was no note and no one that I could recall had told me to expect them.

Inside the cylinders were thirteen documents about a John McNaughton who qualified for the medical profession at the University of Edinburgh at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and practiced in South Australia and Victoria. Four certificates, on heavy parchment, were written in Latin, including the dates, two of them signed by thirty faculty members, together with their subjects. I could not place this John McNaughton in our family but it certainly was not John Ross McNaughton. So who left the cylinders on the porch? And why was I the custodian of this man's life achievements? Did he have no descendants of his own? I did not find the time to analyze the certificates until 2008 in my fourth year of retirement. Here is their story.

John McNaughton registered for the Medical School at the University of Edinburgh on 27 October 1882 under the authority of the Scottish Branch of the General Medical Council. In his preliminary examination he passed Latin and Greek but failed to satisfy the examiners in Euclid and algebra. He did not present in English (including history and geography), arithmetic,

mechanics, French, German, higher mathematics, natural philosophy, logic, or moral philosophy. However it was noted on 15 April 1886 that he passed Mechanics in October 1883 so perhaps he had to make up the subjects in which he did not qualify in the preliminary exam.



**Figure 2. Joseph Lister, Professor of Surgery in the Medical School, University of Edinburgh, 1870-1877.**

The University of Edinburgh was founded by King James VI of Scotland in 1583 and was the first civic university in Britain. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the city of Edinburgh, with the university at its heart, became the main center of the Scottish Enlightenment and was one of the great intellectual capitals of Europe. The Medical School can trace its history back to 1505 with the formation of the Incorporation of Surgeons and Barber Surgeons, which later became the Royal College of Surgeons. The Faculty of Medicine did not gain formal recognition until 1726. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and much of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries it was regarded as the leading medical center in Europe. Two outstanding teachers were Sir James

Young Simpson, who revolutionized obstetric and surgical practice with the introduction of chloroform anaesthesia in 1847, and Joseph Lister, who introduced antiseptic and aseptic techniques in the 1870s.

Between 24 August and 24 November 1885 John McNaughton attended the Edinburgh Royal Maternity and Simpson Memorial Hospital, was present for ten deliveries, delivered once under superintendence and managed four deliveries by himself to become acquainted with midwifery practice. The building, which opened in 1879, was named for Sir James Young Simpson and was the first in Edinburgh to be planned as a maternity hospital. On 2 August 1886, four years after starting, John McNaughton qualified with Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Surgery degrees. On 17 August he paid five pounds for medical registration in Edinburgh while resident at 9 Walker Street.

Ten months later, on 3 June 1887, he got a registration certificate from the Medical Board of Victoria in the Government Offices in Spring Street. At the time he was resident in Hamilton, which is about 175 miles west of Melbourne and almost 300 miles southeast of Adelaide. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of September of the same year his testimonials were examined by the South Australian Medical Board and he duly qualified as a medical practitioner. A letter from the Adelaide Hospital written by the secretary on 18 August 18(8)7 to Dr. Jno MacNaughton, Adelaide, states: "Sir, Referring to my telegram of the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst., I have now the honor, by direction of the Board of Management, Adelaide Hospital, to inform you that they have been pleased to appoint you Junior House Surgeon for the term ending 30th June 1888."

The foundation stone for the first building to be called the Adelaide Hospital was laid in 1840 and the first patients were admitted in 1841. A Board of Management was appointed to manage its affairs. The second Adelaide Hospital was built on North Terrace in 1856. The west wing contained eight wards and the central block a surgery, a dispensary and quarters for the house surgeon. In 1884 the membership of the Board was set at sixteen. A Medical School opened at the University of Adelaide in 1885 with clinical instruction at the Adelaide Hospital, which at this time had 185 beds and was the only public hospital in Adelaide.



**Figure 3. Adelaide Hospital in the 1870s.**

There is a certificate from the Royal College of Surgeons dated 10 September 1900 showing John McNaughton a Fellow. On 18 October he paid five shillings to register as a Fellow in Edinburgh and gave his residence as 5 Argyle Park Terrace. On 8 May 1902 he paid two pounds to register with the Scottish Branch of the General Medical Council and is shown with a bachelor of science from the University of Edinburgh in 1899.

#### RESOLUTION

It was not until March 2008 that I re-read a letter from Helen McNaughton, written 29 May 1979, in which she says “We have some records of a John McNaughton who completed his medical studies in 1886 ...” with no further clue as to from where these records came. Helen Margaret Gleeson married my second cousin, Alan David McNaughton, but we never met and I was not able to trace them in 2008. On 13 November 2008 I sent the above story to Diane Cummings who manages a Website “South Australian Passenger Lists 1836-1851.” Next day I received an email from Elaine Edney, who told me Dr. John was her grandmother’s uncle and was able to send me some family details. She also referred me to Ron Blair, who told me Dr. John was the brother of his great grandmother, Jessie McNaughton, and gave me more.

Donald McNaughton married Christina McDougall on 16 March 1773 at Kilninian and Kilmore, Argyle, Scotland. Their son Dugald was born in 1794 at Killochan, Argyle; he married Margaret “Peggy” Cameron on 17 February 1821 at Strontian, Argyle. Dugald and Peggy sailed for Australia on the *Edward Johnston* from Liverpool on 17 June 1854 with their adult children, including their son Donald aged 23 and his wife Christina aged 22. They arrived in Portland, Victoria, on 3 September and went directly to live in Hamilton. Donald and Christina’s first child Jessie was born as the *Edward Johnson* was entering Portland harbor.

Their second child, John, was born in Hamilton in 1857. John attended the National Common School in Hamilton and Grenville College in Ballarat, became an apprentice clockmaker and made his own instruments. He matriculated in medicine at the age of 24 at Edinburgh University in the session 1882-1883 and sometimes would walk 28 miles to visit his grandmother Janet McDiarmid in Gorbals, a suburb of Glasgow. He qualified at Edinburgh in 1886 and became registered in Victoria in 1887. When he returned to Victoria he coached his sister Josephine, who was Dux of Alexandra College, Hamilton, in 1887 and 1888; his sister Ruth was Dux in 1886. John married Hanna Mawhinney in 1895 at Ulmarra, on the Pacific coast in northern New South Wales. Their first child, Christina McNaughton, was born there in 1898 and died in 1927 without

issue. Their second child, Mairi Nighean McNaughton, was born in Hamilton in 1904. She suffered from an unknown illness and spent most of her adult life in care facilities. Her father traveled to Paris on more than one occasion to try and find a cure, but without success.

Dr. John lived in South Australia for 11 years, New South Wales for 3 years, Western Australia (where he was resident surgeon at Peak Hill Hospital) for 7 years and Victoria for a total of 55 years. He lived and worked as a medical practitioner (physician) at 101 Grenville Street, Prahran, from 1918 to 1934 and died in Prahran on 24 March 1934. Ron Blair has agreed to be custodian of his papers, which have survived 125 years tightly rolled in metal cylinders. After apparently being abandoned on a marble porch in Melbourne in 1983 exactly 100 years after they started to accumulate they traveled to the United States and were largely forgotten for another 25 years. Now I am confident they have found a good home, with a plan of conservation that stretches far into the future.

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