

ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

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NEWSLETTER 179 - August 2024

The Tomlinson Family of Orbost—Part 1

Recently, a member of the Tomlinson family visited Orbost and met with Noreen (Thomson) and myself. She is Arthur James and Jessie Tomlinson's great-granddaughter and wishes to learn a little more about her family and share photos and information on behalf of the family.

The Tomlinson family played an important role in the early development of Orbost. Here are their stories.

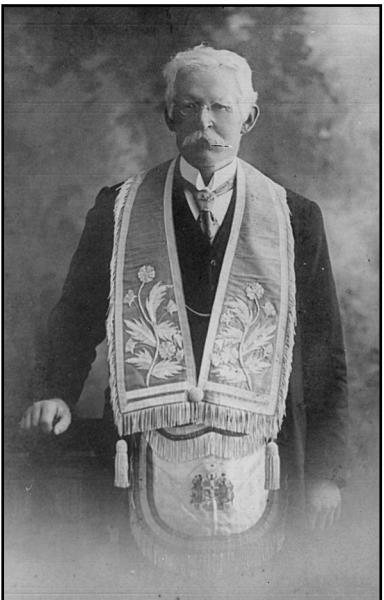
JOHN SCOTT TOMLINSON—the Community Worker

John Scott Tomlinson was a man of sterling qualities who gave valuable service and played an active part in matters of public interest and was connected with practically all committees of his era, working towards the development and welfare of Orbost.

John became one of the determined workers for the Orbost Hospital movement from 1911, when he joined the building fund committee. In 1914, he became president of this committee and took an active part until the hospital was built in 1929 and officially opened in 1930. He then became president of the Committee of Management, a role he held until he became too ill and eventually succumbed to illness in 1939. He became a Life Governor due to the devotion of his time to this worthy institution.

John was one of the active members of the Manchester Unity Lodge, joining in 1892. In 1913, he became secretary and carried on this position until his death. He was also grand master of the Bairnsdale district. He was a foundation member and the first Chaplain of the Masonic Lodge, and an honorary member and trustee of the A.N.A. (Australian Natives' Association).

His services to St. James' Church of England extended over many years during which time he was church secretary, Superintendent of the Sunday School, Church Warden, member of the Board of Guardians until the vestry was formed, then Vestryman and Synod representative.



John Scott TOMLINSON
(1874—1939)

J. S. TOMLINSON,
Grocer, Stationer, Chaff, Grain and
Provision Merchant,
Nicholson street, Orbost,
SALES FOR CASH ONLY.
A trial respectfully solicited.

Snowy River Mail, 4 August 1916



Nicholson Street, Orbost—c. 1915 (SLV)

Right to left: A.J. Royce Grocers, **J.S. TOMLINSON's Newsagency**, Slatterie's Orbost Cash Store, Hardy's Hairdresser, Thomson's Boots, a Bakery and Ironmonger.

For many years he assisted the Orbost Agricultural Show committee, being elected President in 1925. John was an Orbost Shire Councillor for 6 years and a member of the Orbost Water Trust.

When funds were being raised for a Fire Brigade in Orbost, he acted as treasurer of the building fund and took an active part in the establishment of this valuable asset to the township of Orbost.



John Scott and Wilhelmina TOMLINSON

We regret to learn that Mr and Mrs J. S. Tomlinson have sustained a bereavement in the death of their second son, aged two and a half years. The little fellow was suffering from what was believed to be diphtheria, but was evidently recovering when the oppressive weather on Tuesday caused him to go into convulsions, in which he passed away.

Death.

TOMLINSON.—On Tuesday, 9th November, Arthur James, second son of J. S. and W. Tomlinson. Aged 2½ years.

Snowy River Mail (Orbost): 12 November 1915

Death.

TOMLINSON.—On the 11th March, John Scott, youngest son of J. S. and W. Tomlinson. Aged 1 year and 8 months.

Snowy River Mail (Orbost): 16 March 1917



Children of John and Wilhelmina Tomlinson: Constance, Murray, and young Arthur James (he would have died soon after this photograph was taken.)



Murray, Wilhelmina, Constance and John Scott Tomlinson

JOHN SCOTT TOMLINSON - the Family Man

John Scott Tomlinson arrived at Tabbara, east of Orbost, with his parents and siblings, in circa 1886, aged 12 years. He was born in Maldon, Victoria on 5 December 1874, to Arthur James and Jessie Tomlinson.

In 1906, John married **Wilhelmina Murray**, from Hobart, Tasmania.

Wilhelmina was always by her husband's side as he diligently served the community. She sat on the Orbost Hospital Committee of Management, acting as Hon. Secretary and Vice-President when needed.

Wilhelmina was a member of Country Women's Association, Women's Political Association, Women's National League (acting as Vice President from c1911 to c1914).

John and Wilhelmina had five children, all born in Orbost — Agnes, Constance, George ("Murray"), Arthur James and John Scott.

Sadly, John and Wilhelmina lost three children at very young ages.

Agnes died in February 1908, at Orbost, at the age of 11 months—cause not recorded.

Arthur James died in November 1915, at Orbost, at the age of 2½ years—from diphtheria.

John Scott died in March 1917, at Orbost, at the age of 1 year—cause not recorded.

All three children are resting together at the Orbost cemetery.

Some years before his death, John Scott Tomlinson was diagnosed with a serious illness. He continued working with his community affairs until approximately 2 years before his death, the illness finally having a huge impact on his well-being.

John Scott Tomlinson passed away 16 April 1939, at Orbost, aged 64 years. He lies at rest in the Orbost cemetery.

After her husband died, Wilhelmina relinquished her activities in community affairs to live quietly at her home. She suffered from the effects of a stroke for several years and eventually succumbed.

Wilhelmina Tomlinson passed away 14 March 1949, at her home, "The Conort", 52–54 Stanley Street, Orbost, at the age of 75 years. She lies at rest in the Orbost cemetery.

PERSONAL

Mr Jas Tomlinson, president of the Orbost and District Hospital committee, was, owing to indisposition, unable to preside at the committee meeting held on Thursday evening last. This breaks a long sequence of attendances as president of that institution.

Bairnsdale Advertiser: 20 July 1937

ORBOST.—Mr. J. S. Tomlinson has been appointed a life member of the Orbost Hospital as an appreciation of his untiring efforts on behalf of the institution since it started.

Bairnsdale Advertiser: 28 July 1938



Women's Political Association (NON PARTY).

MISS VIDA GOLDSTEIN, accompanied by **MISS CECILIA JOHN**, will visit Orbost next week. **PUBLIC MEETING** on Tuesday evening, Nov. 11th, in the Mechanics' Hall, when Miss Goldstein will give an address on "The truth about the Suffragettes."

Wednesday afternoon, November 12th, meeting for Women only, subject "Political Work for Women and Children."

Wednesday, at 8 p.m., "Social evening." Address by Miss Goldstein.

Collection to defray expenses.

Mrs J. S. TOMLINSON,
Secretary.

Snowy River Mail (Orbost): 7 November 1913

Wilhelmina's brother, George William Lee Murray also resided in Orbost from circa 1920, with his wife, Mary Ann (nee Bates) and four children. The three sons moved from Orbost early in adulthood but a daughter remained. Kathleen Mildred Murray married Frank Warren, the son of William John and Helena Francis (nee McKeown) Warren, a well known family of the Orbost district. George and Mary Ann died in Orbost 1955 and 1953 respectively.

CONSTANCE DOROTHY "CONNIE" TOMLINSON—daughter of John and Wilhelmina

Connie Tomlinson was born on 8 November 1908, at Orbost, Victoria to parents John Scott and Wilhelmina Tomlinson.

Connie never married, and remained in Orbost most of her life, living in the family home at Stanley Street, Orbost. Her father's business was sold after his death, then their home was extended in c1937 to form a **Guest House and Connie operated this ("The Conort")** initially with her mother, Wilhelmina until her death, then became the sole operator until a date unknown.

Connie remained living at the family home until circa 1981. She had worked among the community as a shop assistant, and clerical officer (Costs Clerk) for the Orbost Shire. She also worked for some time in Bairnsdale. She accompanied children to the Portsea Camps, as a guide. As well, she filled the role of steward at the Orbost Agricultural Shows. She had an interest in golf, attending tournaments in Melbourne.

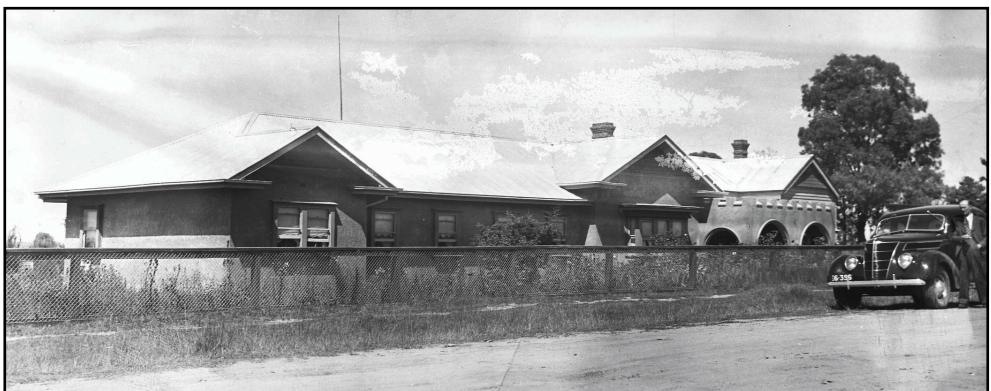
Approximately 1982, the upkeep of "The Conort" became too arduous for Connie while managing a chronic illness. The property fell into disrepair, so she moved to another guest house for some time, "Orbost House", in McLeod Street, Orbost. Connie then moved to supported accommodation in Traralgon. While in Traralgon, Connie became a member of the Traralgon Historical Society, Latrobe Valley Field Nats., and Traralgon Combined Probus Club to name a few.

Connie reacquainted herself with Mrs. Enid Kay, who had spent some time living in Orbost when her husband "Lindsay" was Station Master at the Orbost Railway Station. It is through Enid, who packed up Connie's estate in Traralgon that we are able to view some of these photos, particularly of "The Conort".

Constance Dorothy (Connie) Tomlinson died in July 1997 at the age of 88 years, and is buried in the Gippsland Memorial Cemetery at Traralgon.



Constance Dorothy "Connie" TOMLINSON—1992



**NOW OPEN
"THE CONORT"**
Stanley Street, ORBOST.
CASUAL & PERMANENT GUESTS.
Phone Orbost 82.
Letters P.O. Box 54
C. D. TOMLINSON.

Snowy River Mail (Orbost): 6 January 1937

GEORGE ARTHUR "MURRAY" TOMLINSON—son of John and Wilhelmina

"Murray" Tomlinson was the surviving son of John and Wilhelmina Tomlinson. He was born on 21 January 1911 in Orbost, Victoria. He married Dorothy Jean Burgess on 8 August 1940 in South Melbourne.

After leaving school, he worked for his father in the General Store, Nicholson Street, Orbost. George was a keen sportsman, playing tennis, golf, fishing and cricket. The Tomlinson family sponsored a trophy award to the Orbost cricket club for many years. After the selling of his father's business when Murray's father died, he moved to Tasmania.

When WW2 broke out, Murray joined the A.A.S.C. (Australian Army Service Corps) serving as a Stores Hand. After he was medically discharged in May 1945, he went back to Hobart although his mother and sister wanted him to move back to Orbost to help run the Boarding House as his mother was ill. He came back to Orbost in 1949 for approximately 12 months.

Eventually he moved to Mordialloc, Victoria before retiring at the age of 65 years as an Office Manager of a Melbourne Wool Shipping Company. He then moved to Bridgewater on Loddon so he could spend time fishing.

George Arthur "Murray" Tomlinson died in the Bendigo Hospital in 1989.



George Arthur "Murray" TOMLINSON

Master Murray Tomlinson, only son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Tomlinson, of Orbost, has won a scholarship, entitling him to three years' free tuition at any Government technical school in Victoria.

Bairnsdale Advertiser: 26 January 1924

JOHN SCOTT TOMLINSON — the Business Man

John Scott Tomlinson was an Orbost business man who owned and operated a General Merchandise store from circa 1909 until 1939.

The first advertisement in the local Orbost newspaper, Snowy River Mail, advertises his general merchandise store, on **23 December 1909**, selling confectionary, and fancy goods including cordials and biscuits, stationery and toys. The business motto reads **"Do unto all as would be done by."**

December 1913, the Snowy River Mail advertises that a business **"T.M.G. Coy"** have purchased the business of A.J. Royce and Co. The business now involves **Tomlinson, Murray & Gall**. In this advertisement they ask for their fair share of Xmas business and the motto is **"Treated Most Generously"**, a play on their surname initials could be assumed.

In May 1914, there is an indication in a Public Notice of the Snowy River Mail, of a move of address from "two doors from George Temple's store" to where F.B. Dickens stands today, in Nicholson Street, Orbost. The business motto was **"A trial respectfully solicited."**

June 1914, the Snowy River Mail, indicates the retirement of Clarence Malvalio Murray from the partnership, to join the WW1 campaign. Clarence is the brother of John's wife, Wilhelmina. A partnership between **"Tomlinson & Gall"** is formed, advertising the supply of groceries and stationery as well as grains, chaff and provisions.

Circa 1917 is an advertisement indicating a partnership of **"Tomlinson & Murray."** Wilhelmina (John's wife) was nee Murray so it is probable that the partnership was between John and a brother-in-law. The advertisement indicated the supply of groceries, stationery and fancy goods, and fresh bread daily. The business motto in this instance was **"Prompt attention, civility and cleanliness."**

Circa 1917, a partnership between **"Tomlinson & McFarlane Bros."** is indicated by the business advertisements, supplying general merchandise as well as clothing including "suits to measure."

The last advertisement for **"J.S. Tomlinson"** is found in September 1929. Before his death in 1939, John Scott Tomlinson was diagnosed with a serious illness which lasted many years, so by the lack of advertisements, it may be assumed he downscale his business activities but still participated, as well as in his community interests.

In the Snowy River Mail April 1934, **"Murray & Jennings"**, (late **J.S. Tomlinson**) began advertising. Again it is probable that George Murray, (Wilhelmina's brother) began co-managing John's business. This supports family lore that the family took over the business until it was sold.



SHOPBREAKING AT ORBOST.

Between Saturday night and Sunday morning the shop of Mr. Tomlinson, at Orbost, was burglariously entered and articles (cigars, watches, fountain pens, etc.) of the value of about £30 removed.

Bairnsdale Advertiser: 28 August 1920

An exciting incident occurred in Nicholson street last Thursday, when a horse attached to a light spring cart, the property of Mr. Russell of Beté Bolong, bolted. The turnout was left standing in front of Messrs. Epelstun and Rodwell's premises, when the horse took fright and careered along the main thoroughfare, colliding with a tree guard and shattering it. The impact turned the maddened animal towards the footpath, when the cart wheel struck a verandah post at Tomlinson and McFarlane's store, and the whole turnout turned upside down. The verandah was badly damaged, whilst the horse received injuries to its legs. The harness was also damaged, and one of the springs of the cart was fractured.

Bairnsdale Advertiser: 27 June 1924



Tomlinson and McFarlane Bros. Baker's Cart (driver unknown) c1925



Tomlinson and McFarlane Bros. store, Nicholson Street, Orbost. c1925



John Scott Tomlinson's store in Nicholson Street, Orbost. c1930

Thank you to Noreen Thomson for sharing the journey of collection and discovery of the Tomlinson family of Orbost.

Thank you to Faye Marr (John Scott Tomlinson's granddaughter) for bringing to our attention the huge input the Tomlinson family had in the development of Orbost in the earlier years.

Thank you to Lorraine Coulton for steering us in the direction of contact for Enid Kay.

Thank you to Enid Kay (friend of Connie's) for holding the Connie Tomlinson archive for 27 years. This included information, photos, paperwork and personal writings.

Thank you to Pam Sundstrum for sharing more photos and information on her grandparents, John Scott and Wilhelmina Tomlinson.