

A LIFE IN ORDER

Timeline

Alexander Shearer & Annie Tyre, year by year

Scotland — origins & childhood (to 1909)

DATE	WHO	PLACE	EVENT	IN THE WIDER WORLD
1846-1910		Ardrossan, Ayrshire	Ardrossan — a Clyde-coast port & shipbuilding burgh: coal & pig-iron shipped to Europe and North America, passenger sailings from 1834. A world of ships, the sea and emigration.	Ardrossan — a Clyde-coast port & shipbuilding burgh: coal & pig-iron shipped to Europe and North America, passenger sailings from 1834. A world of ships, the sea and emigration.
1869-1911		Glasgow / at sea	The 'unlucky' Loch Line of Glasgow — about half its clippers lost	The 'unlucky' Loch Line of Glasgow — about half its clippers lost
1881-1917		Castlereagh, NSW	Mendooran & Coonamble — Castlereagh wool/wheat towns; railways reached them 1910–1917	Mendooran & Coonamble — Castlereagh wool/wheat towns; railways reached them 1910–1917
1884	GC	Bathurst, NSW	George Herbert Colley born (Bathurst; father James Colley)	—
1885-11-23	AS	Ardrossan, Scotland	Parents Alexander 3 Shearer & Margaret Wylie marry	—
1887-12-13	AS	Ardrossan, Ayrshire	Alexander 4 Shearer born	Ardrossan was a Clyde-coast shipbuilding & port town — coal and pig-iron shipped to Europe and North America. (S-191)
1889-12-23	AT	Ardrossan, Ayrshire	Annie Barclay Tyre born	Born in the same Ayrshire port; her father was a draper there. (S-191, S-108)

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1891	AS	Ardrossan	Alexander recorded with family, 1891 Scotland census	—
1891	AT	Ardrossan	Annie recorded with family, 1891 Scotland census	—
1900/1910	AS	at sea	Alexander at sea on the Loch Line / 'Loch Katrine' (following his father's ship-carpenter trade)	The Loch Line of Glasgow was notoriously unlucky — about half its ships were lost. (S-190) Raised by the Clyde, going to sea was a natural path; he followed his father's ship-carpentry trade. (S-191, F-001)
1901	AS	Ardrossan	Alexander in 1901 census	—
1901	AS	Ardrossan	Alexander wins a school prize	—
1901	AT	Ardrossan	Annie in 1901 census	—
1901		Australia	Australia federates	Australia federated on 1 January 1901 — the six colonies became the Commonwealth. Alexander stepped ashore (1910) into a young, self-defining nation.
1901-05-17	AS	214 Glasgow St, Ardrossan	Alexander's father dies of TB (phthisis pulmonalis)	TB (consumption) was rampant in crowded Clydeside towns. (S-191)
1902-1920s		Australia	Wheat, wool & recurring drought on the Castlereagh — the boom-and-bust economy that shaped the district	Drought and the wheat-wool cycle ruled the central-west NSW economy. (CTX-06, S-194)
1908	AS	Scotland	Alexander performs in an operetta (newspaper notice)	—
1909	AS	Scotland	Alexander in lodge record book (early lodge membership)	—

To Australia, marriage & family (1910–1921)

DATE	WHO	PLACE	EVENT	IN THE WIDER WORLD
1910-05-10	AS	Sydney Harbour (Athol Bight), NSW	Alexander arrives Australia as ordinary seaman, SS Loch Katrine	His ship, the Loch Katrine, had just been dismasted in a Bass Strait gale and towed into Sydney. (S-018, S-190)

DATE	WHO	PLACE	EVENT	IN THE WIDER WORLD
1912	AS	Coonamble NSW	Alexander in Coonamble (speech / news clippings)	Coonamble was a Castlereagh wool/wheat/beef town; the railway had reached it in 1910. (S-196)
1912	AS	Coonamble NSW	Alexander wins the Bass Solo at the Coonamble Eisteddfod	A keen singer — also performed in a Scottish operetta in 1908. (S-108)
1913	AS	Coonamble NSW	Alexander on the electoral roll, Coonamble	Coonamble district — closer settlement was opening the land to newcomers like Alexander. (S-196)
1913	AS	London / Scotland	Alexander returns to Scotland (departs London) — to propose to Annie	—
1913-1919	AS	NSW	Alexander active in his lodge(s) — joins 1913, singing/sponsor roles to 1919	—
1914-07-26	AT	Sydney NSW	Annie arrives Sydney aboard ship from Scotland	—
1914-07-28	AS,AT	Neutral Bay Presbyterian, North Sydney	Alexander marries Annie	—
1914-1918		Australia	The First World War	Some 416,000 Australians enlisted in the Great War; the Castlereagh district sent its share. George Colley served — and came home to farm beside the Shearers.
1914-1918		Western Front	WWI poison gas — survivors carried chronic bronchitis & heart strain for life (George Colley)	WWI poison gas — survivors carried chronic bronchitis & heart strain for life (George Colley)
1915	MS	NSW	Daughter Margaret (Meg) Shearer born	—
1915	GC	Wheatlands, Mendooran NSW	George granted 'Wheatlands' Homestead Farm (Portion 82, 1358 ac) north of Mendooran	—
1916-1939		NSW		Soldier settlement — Returned Soldiers Settlement Act 1916; £500–£626 advances; ~60% of settlers gone by 1939

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1917	AS,AT	NSW	Alex & Annie in the news (incl. with brother Hugh)	—
1917	AS	'Ardrossan', Mendooran NSW	Alexander leased and named his property 'Ardrossan' (Portions 76/77) just outside Mendooran	—
1918	AS	Mendooran/ Coonamble NSW	Alexander in business / employment record; letter to his brother	—
1918-06-18	AS	Mendooran NSW	Registers the building firm 'Shearer & Allan', builders & contractors	—
1919		<i>Australia</i>	<i>Influenza pandemic reaches Australia</i>	<i>The 1919 'Spanish' influenza pandemic killed about 15,000 Australians; respiratory illness shadowed these years — the era in which Alexander would die of pneumonia in 1921.</i>
1919	GC	Yarragrin/Caigan, NSW	George took up a Returned Soldiers' Special Holding (403 ac) near Wheatlands	Returned Soldiers Settlement Act 1916 — ~60% of soldier settlers had left their blocks by 1939. (S-210)
1919-04	GC	Coolah NSW	George Colley welcomed home after WWI — badly gassed on the Western Front	Gas casualties suffered chronic bronchitis and heart strain for years. (S-193)
1921-12-17	LS	NSW	Daughter Alexandra (Lex) born — 16 days after her father's death	—
1921-12-01	AS	Mendooran NSW	Alexander dies of pneumonia, aged 33	Pneumonia was a major killer before antibiotics; he died within days of falling ill. (S-052)
1921-01-27	GC	'Wheatlands', Mendooran NSW	George writes to his hospital friend Cliff Mason — wheat, sheep and the gas that 'makes a man shake'	Soldier-settler farming after the war. (S-210)
1921-12	AS	Mendooran NSW		—

DATE	WHO	PLACE	EVENT	IN THE WIDER WORLD
			Funeral led by ~100 Oddfellows & Masonic brethren; buried at Mendooran	

Widowhood, return & remarriage (1922–1929)

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1922	AS	NSW	Alexander's estate — probate (died intestate); lodge death funds to family	—
1922-09	AT	Sydney → Scotland	Annie leaves for Scotland with the children	—
1922-01	AT	Mendooran NSW	Annie places a public notice thanking the district for its sympathy	—
1922		Baulkham Hills NSW	William Thompson Masonic School founded for deceased Freemasons' children (where Lex & her sisters boarded)	William Thompson Masonic School founded for deceased Freemasons' children (where Lex & her sisters boarded)
1924-06-17	AT	Australia	Annie returns to Australia	—
1924-1925	AT	Mendooran NSW	Annie sewing notices; opens a shop (newspaper)	—
1924	GC	Mendooran village NSW	George bought the Mendooran town block (Allot 6 Sec 8, Bandulla St)	—
1924-10	AT	Mendooran NSW	Annie advertises sewing & children's underclothing work	—
1925-01	AT	Mendooran NSW	New premises being built for Annie's fruit shop	—
1928	GC	Mendooran district	George Colley purchases land	—
1929	AT,GC	Dubbo district NSW (registration)	Annie marries George H Colley	—

DATE	WHO	PLACE	EVENT	IN THE WIDER WORLD
1929-1932		Australia	<i>The Great Depression (1929–32) — in NSW unemployment ran from ~10% to ~32%, wool and wheat prices halved, and banks foreclosed on many farms; wheat growers got relief until prices recovered in 1935–36</i>	<i>Unemployment neared 30% by 1932. On the land, prices collapsed, school fees bit, and families made hard arrangements — the backdrop to Annie and George's 1930s.</i>
1929-02-20	AT,GC	Mendooran NSW	The town block was transferred to Annie B. Shearer — before her marriage to George later that year	—

The Colley years — farms & Depression (1930–1939)

DATE	WHO	PLACE	EVENT	IN THE WIDER WORLD
1930	JC	NSW	Son James Herbert (Bert) Colley born (per family record)	Born into the Depression (1929–32): NSW unemployment hit ~32% and farm incomes collapsed. (CTX-04, S-209)
1930-1977	AT	Mendooran → Sydney → Castle Hill	Annie's residence trail across the electoral rolls	—
1931	GC	Wheatlands, Mendooran NSW	George surrendered the Wheatlands grant (mortgaged; passed to the Bank of NSW) — the farm lost by the mid-1930s	Depression-era debt and land-value collapse broke many Castlereagh farmers. (S-209, S-194)
1936	AT,GC	NSW	Annie & George land valuation; daughter Margaret's engagement	—
1936-05	LS,CS	Mendooran NSW	Lexie & Rene home from boarding school for the holidays with their mother	They boarded at the William Thompson Masonic School, Baulkham Hills — founded 1922 for deceased Freemasons' children. (S-192)
1936-06-25	GC	Mendooran NSW	George's land valuation reduced at the Valuation Court	Depression-era land-value reductions across the district. (S-209)
1938	AT	Sydney NSW	Annie moves to Sydney (newspaper)	—
1939-1945		Australia	<i>The Second World War</i>	

DATE	WHO	PLACE	EVENT	IN THE WIDER WORLD
				<i>The war touched the next generation as Annie's children reached adulthood.</i>
1939-08-30	GC,AT	Kenthurst NSW	George buys the Kenthurst orchard (40 ac, Portion 51)	The Hills orchard belt supplying Sydney's markets. (S-197)

Sydney, Kenthurst & later life (1940–1979)

DATE	WHO	PLACE	EVENT	IN THE WIDER WORLD
1940	GC,AT	Kenthurst NSW	George & Annie's orchard at Kenthurst	Kenthurst/Castle Hill was the Hills-district orchard belt supplying Sydney. (S-197)
1950	GC	NSW	George Colley dies	—
1951	AT	Kenthurst NSW	Annie inherits then sells the Kenthurst orchard	—
1979-05-25	AT	NSW	Annie dies	—
2004	LS	—	Lex Shearer's recorded oral history interview	—

Drawn from the family's own documents and the public records, with the wider history woven in.