Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE26022510

Taylor-Farrell, Myra Juliet

(1878 - 1957)

Born	18780225, Kilrush County Clare Ireland
Died	19570308, Mosman New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Inventor

Summary

Myra Taylor-Farrell was a prolific inventor who was born in Ireland and migrated to Australia as a child. She applied for patents for many of her inventions which included a corset without hard stays, a ‘stitchless button’ (press-stud), a baby sling and defence equipment including a ‘rifle, shell and machine-gun proof’ barricade.

Details

Myra Taylor-Farrell was born in Ireland, migrated to Australia as a child and was educated in Broken Hill at St Peter’s School, founded by her parents, Marcus and Harriett Welsh. Marcus was an Irish Protestant clergyman and Harriett, born in Australia, was the daughter of an engineer. They had married in New Zealand before returning to Ireland, and then emigrating to Australia in 1880.

From a young age Myra was able to come up with practical inventions as solutions to problems she identified: her first invention at the age of 10 was for a self-locking safety pin. In a newspaper article in 1915, she described her process of identifying a problem and thinking about it, then ‘sleeping on it’. On waking, she would write down, from right to left, the details of how to construct a device to solve the problem, then use a mirror to copy those details from left to right so they could be read.

Among her many inventions were: a device to copy and adjust for size sewing patterns from print directly to fabric, a ‘truss for rectifying slackness in facial muscles’, a corset without hard stays, a ‘stitchless button’ (press-stud), a baby sling, an automated fruit picker and packer, a folding pram hood, a collapsible washing line for limited spaces, and a ‘rifle, shell and machine-gun proof’ barricade and a long-range ‘rayless’ light (both of these were acquired by the Defence Department in World War 1). She applied for patents for many of her inventions from 1905 and these applications with their detailed drawings are held by the National Archives of Australia, some of which have been digitised.

She married William Taylor in 1906 who was suffering from tuberculosis and she treated him with another of her inventions, an inhaler. After his death in 1912 in Adelaide, she married William George Farrell in 1919 in Sydney and lived in Mosman until her death in 1957.

Published resources

Article
Mosman's Marvellous Myra, Barton, Kathryn, 19 April 2023,
https://mosmancollective.com/history/myra-taylor-farrell-the-odd-duck-mosman-mum-who-became-australias-most-prolific-femal

Remarkable success of a woman inventor who was educated in Broken Hill, 3 July 1915,
https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/45380569

Woman inventor Mrs Myra Juliet Taylor: Versatile and imaginative, 28 August 1915,
https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/136727841

Archival resources

National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra
Application for Letters Patent for an invention by Myra Juliet Farrell, titled - Truss for rectifying slackness in facial muscles

Application for registration of a design by Myra Juliet Farrell for Belt-corselet

Application for registration of a design by Myra Juliet Farrell for Step-in belt corset

Application for registration of a design by Myra Juliet Farrell for Inhaler

Application for registration of a design by Myra Juliet Farrell for Inhaler

Application for registration of design by Myra Juliet Farrell for Head gear

Application for registration of a design by Myra Juliet Farrell for Appliance to relieve the strain of carrying an infant

An improved stayette for body wear

Improvements in and connected with hoods of perambulators and the like

Improved device to facilitate carrying an infant

Author Details
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