Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6417

Grigg, Mary Wills

(1821 - 1892)

Born	18210101, Braddock Cornwall England
Died	18920913, Boort Victoria Australia
Occupation	Farmer, Sheep farmer, Wheat farmer

Summary

Cornish immigrant Mary Wills Grigg selected and was granted a Mallee leasehold of land in 1885 in Victoria, and farmed sheep in Boort until her death at the age of 70.

Details

Mary Wills Grigg was born in the parish of Braddock (also known as Broadoak), Cornwall, a farming community, in 1821. Her father John Grigg was noted as a labourer, woodman and farmer in various documents.

Mary was the second daughter of John and Grace Grigg. Her mother Grace (64) and younger sister Jane (26) both died in 1850, leaving a household of five adult children headed by John at the 1851 census. John was recorded as a farmer, his eldest daughter Catherine as housekeeper, his sons William, Nicholas and Joseph as farmer's sons and Mary as a farmer's daughter. John died in 1852 (68) and Catherine (36) died in 1853. By the 1861 census Mary was part of her unmarried brother Nicholas's household, noted as housekeeper. Nicholas was a farmer employing one man. Their younger brother Joseph lived with them, along with a servant. Together the three siblings left Cornwall and emigrated to Australia in 1863 on the ship Istanboul, arriving in Melbourne in June of that year. Mary was 41.

At the age of 63, in 1885, Mary had a Mallee lease granted, which she selected herself, and farmed there until her death in 1892, aged 70. It may be that the earlier insolvency of one of her brothers prompted her lease application. While her death certificate stated her occupation as 'spinster' and 'domestic duties' – the informant was her younger brother Joseph – Mary's will and probate documents reveal that she was a 'spinster' and 'farmer'.

In her will she left all her estate and personal property to another local Boort farmer, Henry Scott Lanyon. Lanyon 'did not know why she left it to him'. Joseph Grigg claimed it was only 'in trust till such time as he obtained a certificate of discharge from his debts, being at the time an insolvent'. Perhaps Mary wasn't confident in the ability of her brothers (both of whom she predeceased) to execute her will as required.

Mary's personal estate consisted of the Mallee leasehold, stated to be 960 acres with fencing, shrubbing and clearing improvements, a water tank and shed, wheat crop, 55 sheep, two horses and worn out farming implements.

Mary died on 13 September 1892 of debility and pneumonia in Boort, Victoria, and was buried in Boort Cemetery with Wesleyan rites.

Archival resources

Public Record Office Victoria, Victorian Archives Centre
Mary W Grigg - Will

Mary W Grigg - Probate and Administration Files

Mary W Grigg - Probate and Administration Files

Author Details
Helen Morgan

Created 10 January 2019
Last modified 10 January 2019