Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00407

Maunsell, Evelyn

(1888 - 1977)

Born	18881021, Ilford Essex England
Died	19771231, Brisbane Queensland Australia
Occupation	Pastoralist

Summary

Evelyn Evans was a young English girl from a well-to-do family, who while in Australia as part of a world trip, met and married station manager Charles Maunsell in 1912. They lived at Mulgrave Station which was located on the frontier of far north Queensland. Evelyn endured incredible hardship, with pioneering forcing her to endure hazards that pushed her far beyond the traditional female role; that of mother, wife and homemaker. Her courage and resourcefulness helped further the position and importance of women in colonial society.

Details

A young Evelyn Evans left England on a 'round-the-world' adventure and instead found love and a new life in Australia in 1912. She married property manager Charles Maunsell in Cairns, and they lived together at Mulgrave Station near Mareeba, in a tin shed with a concrete floor. Contrary to the soft grey of England, life in the Atherton Tablelands was hot, wet and isolated.

Despite Evelyn striking up friendships with local Aboriginal children, and running a small school for them on the property, white settlers had a poor reputation among tribal Aborigines in the area. When Charles Maunsell was away mustering they invaded the station and Maggie, mother of the Aboriginal children, hid Evelyn under the bed in order to save her life. Evelyn also survived malaria and several miscarriages, proving to those around her she was no English rose.

Later she and Charles set up their own dairy property on the Atherton Tableland. They retired to Brisbane where Evelyn became actively involved with the Country Women's Association. In 1968 Evelyn's one and only son Ron Maunsell, won a Country Party plebiscite and in March 1969, took a seat in Federal Parliament as Senator Ron Maunsell. The book, *S'pose I Die* (1981) was based on Evelyn's diaries and her conversations with author, Hector Holthouse.

Published resources

Book
Great pioneer women of the outback, De Vries, Susanna, 2005

S'pose I die : the story of Evelyn Maunsell, Holthouse, Hector, 1981

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Evelyn Maunsell, former pioneer, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

Author Details
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