

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5990

Bunbury, Amelia

(1863 - 1956)

Born 1 January, 1863, Busselton Western Australia Adelaide

Died 31 December, 1956, Perth Western Australia Australia

Occupation Photographer

Summary

As well as for her photography, Amelia Bunbury was noted for her hand carved furniture and for her work as a horse breeder. Bunbury's amateur photographs document life on a remote station in Western Australia; her photography includes images of Aboriginal people living in the area that echo the conventions of anthropological photography of the time. She exhibited her work in Melbourne and was published in a number of Western Australian newspapers.

Details

Amelia Bunbury was born Amelia Matilda Pries in 1863. Her father was a merchant and owned a store in Busselton, Western Australia; the Pries family resided at 'Prospect Villa,' also in Busselton. In 1897, aged 34, she married Mervyn Cory Richardson-Bunbury, who was from an equally established pioneering family at Williambury (one thousand kilometres north of Perth), where he owned a station. The couple did not have any children.

During the period 1900-1909 she studied woodcarving at the Perth Technical School, Western Australia, and became noted for her hand-carved furniture.

It is unclear as to how she became interested in photography or how she received training; she may have also studied photography at the Perth Technical School.

She moved to Williambury station with her husband and over the years photographed the everyday life of her surrounds, including the Aboriginal people living there. One of her photographs, *Station Natives in Corroboree Costume* 1910, echoes the approach taken by anthropological photographers of the time by its lining up 'natives' in ascending order, revealing no emotion at all, presumably following the instructions of the white woman in authority (Hall 29).

Bunbury was the only woman photographer from Western Australia to be included in the *Exhibition of Women's Work*, 1907, held at the Exhibition Building, Melbourne. She published her photographs in a number of Perth newspapers using the pseudonym Coyarre and won a number of competitions run by the Western Mail during 1900-1910. Some of her photographs were used in the contemporary histories *The Great North West and its Resources* (1904) and *Busselton and District*.

During her lifetime Amelia Bunbury loved horses and was said to have ridden her own horse up until the age of 83. She became a well-known horse breeder, with some of her horses winning the Perth Cup, Derby and Railway Stakes.

Following the death of her husband in 1910, Amelia Bunbury left Williambury and returned to live at her family home in Busselton. She died in Perth, Western Australia, 1956, at the age of 93.

Collections

Battye Library, State Library of Western Australia.

Nelma Ley collection of photographs, State Library of Western Australia <http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/pdf/pictorial/BA1902.pdf>

Private Collections

Events

1907 - 1910

1907 - 1907

Amelia Bunbury's work featured in the *Exhibition of Women's Work*

1900 - 1910

Published resources

Resource Section

Amelia Bunbury,

<https://www.daa0.org.au/bio/amelia-bunbury/>

Book

Australian Women Photographers 1840 - 1960, Hall, Barbara and Mather, Jenni, 1986

The Great North-West and Its Resources: The Undeveloped Heritage of Western Australia: A Description of the Country and Settlements from Carnavon to Broome., Praagh, Lionel V and Lloyd, Reginald,, 1904

Newspaper Article

"Grandma" of Turf Dies , 93,

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article71764324>

Author Details

Anne Maxwell (with Morfia Grondas and Lucy Van)

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