

MAGGIE SWAN



Lachlan and Margaret's wedding photo

Maggie Swan (age 20 at signing petition) Margaret Edgar Helen Headley Jane Thompson Campbell Swan was born 19th January 1871 at Konongwootong Station, the second of nine children of John Swan and Jane (Campbell) Swan. In this family multiple monikers were bestowed on all nine children. Some were given more than others, but my grandmother seems to have copped the full whammy at baptism. Perhaps they threw the family bible at her and all the ancestors' names fell out onto her head! The burden of this possibly explains why when faced with the limited space on the Suffrage Petition, she simply signed herself "Maggie Swan".

I almost missed her name when examining the petition online. As in the case of her future mother-in-law (see above) there is a mistake in the transcription, so the typed version of her name on the petition database appears as "Maggie Pivan". Her younger sister, Bella Swan signed two places below, so in checking her signature, I found my grandmother. 'Pivan' is in fact 'Swan'.

Another trap for historians and genealogists when studying the petition lies in the fact that Bella Swan gives her address as Grasmere, while Maggie lists hers as Cooramook. Both young ladies would have been residing at their parents' home "Woodburn Park" in 1891. The family's farm no longer exists, but its location would accurately be described as Cooramook. The line between these two adjacent localities is not well defined. Maggie's occupation, at the time of her marriage is listed as 'lady's help', so she perhaps signed the petition at her workplace.

Maggie was educated at Ballangeich South SS and at Purnim. Ballangeich South school was closer to the home but was a half time school with Ballangeich West SS from 1871. There was a four mile walk to Purnim. In 1879 Ballangeich West closed and in 1881 was put onto a bullock wagon and moved to Cooramook, which became a full time school in 1880, so perhaps she went there as well.

In 1907 Margaret married Lachlan Macdonald* at her parents' home in Cooramook. The couple would have been well acquainted over many years

residency in the same district: the Swans in Cooramook, and the Macdonalds in Purnim West. However neither party could be accused of rushing into marriage: the bride was 37 and the groom 43 when the marriage took place.

Following the marriage Lachlan and Margaret lived at 'Roseneath North', a property bought by Lachlan and his brother Sandy from the estate of Allan Jenkins of 'Roseneath'. They had one stillborn child and another which did not survive infancy, followed by three children who thrived: Mavis b. 1909, Murdoch b. 1912 and Alexander b. 1915.

Lachlan died suddenly in 1928, leaving Maggie with three teenage children and a farm to run. She did this capably with the assistance of her children, whose education was curtailed due to their father's death. Maggie died in 1941 during a visit to her Swan relatives in Warragul, Victoria. They are buried in Warrnambool Cemetery.

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