

W G Evans

The Evans family – three generations of surveyors.

Thomas and Margaret Evans departed from Campbeltown in Scotland in 1852 with two sons, William Greig (Margaret's maiden name) age 5 and Thomas age 1, arriving in Adelaide on December 26. He was a military surveyor in the Sappers and Miners Company and had taken part in the Ordinance Survey of Scotland which used the still novel system of triangulation, also used by Colonel Light in his Adelaide and South Australian surveys. They travelled on the HMS Hercules, a naval vessel: a two decker (gun decks) classified as a second rater. On this voyage she carried civilian immigrants but Thomas was still in the British Army, and is described as a member of the guard in the passenger list. Three daughters; Sara, Agatha and Jessica, were all born in South Australia. The girls remained spinsters, and ran "The Misses Evans" School" in North Adelaide.

Thomas Sr. immediately entered the survey department of the Colonial Government; this would have been arranged before his departure from Scotland. He worked as a government surveyor from 1853 to 1873. In April 1864 prior to his trigonometrical survey of Eyre Peninsula from Cleve to Fowlers Bay his son William Greig Evans became his Cadet. The Society has a copy of William's application in immaculate copperplate, and the Surveyor General, George Goyder's scrawled approval. On this survey the grave of Darke, an early explorer, was found. Darke had been speared and badly injured at Waddike Rocks, and was carried by his survey party to Darke's Peak (so named by Thomas Evans in 1865), where he died and was buried .

After the Government Astronomer Charles Todd established the true Province Boundary with New South Wales North of the River Murray, Thomas was appointed in 1868 to survey this Eastern Boundary. After about 200 miles he succumbed to scurvy and had to be brought back to The Burra on a litter. He did not sign off the survey, but the records (dockets) are in the Lands Department. Thomas surveyed extensively in South Australia and he, and many of his descendants are buried in North Road Cemetery.

William Greig Evans' cadetship with his father in 1864 was followed by 53 years service as a Government Surveyor. He probably surveyed and subdivided more land than any other surveyor in South Australia. Beginning with the Cleve to Fowlers Bay survey, his works included Southern York Peninsula, the townships of Ceduna, Blinman, and the Adelaide suburb of Malvern. His brother Thomas Jnr was also a surveyor: less is known of his work by this branch of the family.

In 1895 William surveyed the hundred of Moralana, prior to the separation of Moralana station from Arkaba. He named the peaks of the Western wall of Wilpena pound for relatives and members of his survey party. Hans Mincham, in "The Story of the Flinders Ranges" records that Dorothy's Peak, Beatrice Hill and Madges Hill are named for his two daughters, Beatrice Madge and Dorothy; Harold's Hill for his son Harold. Reggie's Nob after his son Reginald, and Greig's Peak for his mother's maiden name, also his own second name. Members of his survey party provide Dick's Nob (Dick Crabb), Walter's Hill (Walter Rogers, a cadet surveyor) and Fred's Nob (Fred Orchard, William's brother in law). Snave Hill is Evans spelled backwards.

Mincham sourced this information from William Evans' son, Colin Greig Evans. Colin was unaware of the source of Pompey's pillar, but William's grandson, Tony Evans established that it was the European given name of an indigenous member of the survey party. It is not known if he was an Adnyamathanha man – one would like to think so.

In a private survey of 1853, Frederick Sinnett named two of these peaks Mt Boord and Bimboornina Hill, the latter being the only pre-European name to survive in the area. Evans was unaware of this earlier survey, or he probably would have retained Sinnett's names.

Several watercourses and other features in the valley between The Pound Wall and Elder's Range were also named for family members and are marked on the Adelaide Bushwalkers' map of the

pound and surrounds.

It is handed down in the family that William was offered the position of Surveyor General, but being of a shy and retiring nature he declined.

Colin Greig Evans, one of William's sons, was also in the profession. He was a Hydrographic Surveyor with the Harbours Board and later a surveyor with the Highways Department; the third generation of surveyors. He surveyed the Blue Lake in Mount Gambier and was involved with the Jervois and Blanchetown bridges.

The Society in association with the Institution of Surveyors Australia has placed a memorial and interpretation on Merna Mora station, 40 km north of Hawker on the Leigh Creek road, 1km south of the Moralana Scenic Drive junction, with an opening ceremony on May 21st 2011. There are interpretive panels, a replica survey cairn of the era and rest and picnic facilities. Geraldine Symons, William's great granddaughter was the original proponent of the memorial. Grandson Tony Evans was the major source of the information in this account, both with oral history and his collection of documents and copies of archival material, and his assistance is gratefully acknowledged. The research assistance of David Wald was also gratefully received.

¹ See GeoNews July - August 1995 p. 17-19 and subsequent issues for a discussion of the circumstances of Darke's death.

² Winton, W. A. *History of the surveys of the Eastern Boundaries of the Province of South Australia* in Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (S.A. Branch). Proceedings Volume 55 (1953-54), p. 1-11.

³ Evan's name for Mt Boort was Dorothy's Peak, and his name for Bimboornina Hill was Dick's Nob. Both are located on the Western side of Wilpena Pound.



HMS Hercules



W G Evans and Grandson

Sources:

Personal comments and records of The Evans family, particularly Tony Evans.

Mincham, Hans. *The Story of the Flinders Ranges*. Adelaide: Rigby, 1964.

Royal Geographical Society of South Australia Inc. *GeoNews* July-August 1995, p.17-19;

November – December 1995, p.32-34; March – April 1996, p.28-29.

Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (S.A. Branch), *Proceedings* Volume 55 (1953-54).

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