

Arthur Patterson Atherton Archive

Arthur Patterson Atherton was born on the 30th October 1864 in Rockhampton. He was the son of James Atherton and Mary Patterson.

Arthur's grandfather, Edmund Atherton moved with his wife Esther and family to Australia from Lancashire in 1844. Edmund and Esther leased a farm near Armidale, running sheep and cattle. In 1856, the family moved to the Rockhampton district. Of their nine children, their son, John (b. 1837), later moved to what is now known as the Atherton Tableland. Their eldest son, James (b. 1830), married Mary Patterson (b. 1829) in 1861 and they had eight children including Arthur Patterson Atherton (b. 1864). James and Mary had properties in the Yeppoon district in 1869 including "Adelaide Park" where they ran cattle. While growing up at Adelaide Park, James' children were home tutored. Arthur's school essays from 1876 have been preserved and transcribed.

In 1888, Arthur moved up to the Tablelands, where his uncle John had become a successful farmer since 1876, running cattle at a property called "Emerald End" on the Barron River near Mareeba. John later discovered tin on his property and named the township of Tinaroo. The Atherton Tablelands also took its name from John Atherton. Arthur worked running machinery for the first sawmill on the Tablelands. He met his future wife Christina "Chrissie" Swan Wylie in Port Douglas and they were married there in 1905.

After their marriage, Arthur and Chrissie took up a property west of Chillagoe called "Nychum". They had four children : Margaret (1906), David (1907), Esther (1909) and Lucy (1911). Arthur then found that raising a young family was difficult so far from town so they moved to "Northedge" between Mt. Molloy and Mareeba. In 1912, they purchased "Uralla" just north of Mossman, where they ran a mixed farm that included dairy and sugar cane. In 1920, a cyclone destroyed their home which had to be rebuilt and 1923 brought a drought which added to their difficulties. Arthur died in 1940 and Chrissie died in 1951.

Arthur was a keen writer and kept numerous diaries, some of which have been preserved and transcribed by his granddaughter, Elna Kerswell, who has written an account of the history of her Atherton family connections. The descendants of Edmund and Esther Atherton from Lancashire, have settled in many Queensland towns including Rockhampton, Yeppoon, Sarina, Mackay, Ayr, Mareeba, Mossman, Normanton and Cairns.

Archive Location: 40R

Detailed Listing:

- APA/1 Diaries 1924 - 1929, 1931 – 1934. All diary entries have been transcribed and published in the book by Elna Kerswell, pp. 61-250.
- APA/1/1 1924 Diary
- APA/1/2 1925 Diary
- APA/1/3 1926 Diary
- APA/1/4 1927 Diary
- APA/1/5 1928 Diary
- APA/1/6 1929 Diary
- APA/1/7 1931 Diary
- APA/1/8 1932 Diary
- APA/1/9 1933 Diary
- APA/1/10 1934 Diary
- APA/2 Book: *Afterthoughts from Arthur: The personal essays and diaries of a Queensland pioneer: Arthur Patterson Atherton* compiled by Elna Kerswell, a granddaughter.
- APA/3 Essays 28.1.1876 – 24.11.1876
Weekly essays written for school assignments during home tutoring at Adelaide Park with notations made by tutor. There are also several maths assignments. All essays have been transcribed and published in the book by Elna Kerswell, pp. 15-40. The essays describe the activities undertaken by Arthur Patterson Atherton when he was 12 years old.
- APA/4 Letter to mother 19.1.1877