

DAUGHTER OF THE TERRITORY
By Jacqueline Hammer

"An epic story of adventure, love and survival in the wilds of the Northern Territory"
Published 2015 by Arena Books, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest.

"Darwin has matured now ,grown up ,smoothed down her skirts, straightened her tiara..." or has she? This is a gem of a book, brimming with good humour, tolerance, adventure and endurance shown by a remarkable woman, Jacqueline Hammer, nee Sargeant, Pioneer Number 0376., in such a harsh, challenging environment. Her memories of the Territory are invaluable and extremely entertaining, with an element of " can't look away", especially when being read in an airconditioned house in modern Darwin.

Her clear memories of people and places span many years and reflect her love of her family and her "eclectic treasure house of friends" of all colour, creeds and religion. Her acceptance of "the non conformist" gives a sense of depth to her many experiences ranging from Darwin, Brock Creek, Newcastle Waters, Pine Creek, Borroloola, McArthur Station ,to Bauhinia Station and all points inbetween,.

So many people say they will write a book someday but never do. Thank goodness this one has emerged bringing us the colourful past. We get a feel of driving on the Barkley, the life of a policeman in the 1920s, pub life at the Junction Hotel, scratching a living on Stations in isolated places . We learn of clever brolgas, loyal dogs and train trips on Leaping Lena. You can almost see Chinatown and taste the lollies from the corner shop.

To me the fear of putting your 18 monthS old baby girl into her cot with several water bottles while you battle with a life threatening infection all alone is stuff of nightmares. To make sure you are dressed nicely and wearing lipstick at the time makes you a champion.....go Jack-a-leen...

This book has quotes a plenty that I am happy to steal. "Whiskey was invented so the Irish wouldn't rule the world" is one I identify with but as someone who has always shared her life with dogs "Should we not all strive to be the person our dogs think we are" is a beauty.' Yea for "It is an unfortunate thing God did not come to me. I invited him in on several occasions but he thought better of it and moved on". However the most touching quote comes from her husband Ken " 56 years later I still look at her each day with wonder and appreciation" ... JOY...