



# **Africa: What It Gave Me, What It Took from Me: Remembrances from My Life as a German Settler in South West Africa**

*Margarethe von Eckenbrecher*

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*Africa: What It Gave Me, What It Took from Me* is a memoir of an extraordinary woman who, as a newlywed, travelled with her husband to German South West Africa, a colony situated just above South African on the Atlantic coast. Here they begin a farm in a quite remote area where they raise cattle, sheep, and goats and plant large gardens on the banks of the Omaruru River. They build a comfortable home and welcome their first child. As the von Eckenbrechers work hard to build, their farm natives, whose land has been appropriated by the colonial government, are planning a revolt against colonial rule. Insurrection begins and the von Eckenbrechers are in the midst of it all. As the rebellion strengthens, Frau von Eckenbrecher returns to Germany to wait out the insurrection. Her husband eventually returns as well. Frau von Eckenbrecher never feels completely at home again in Germany. The von Eckenbrechers divorce and Frau von Eckenbrecher returns to South West Africa with her two sons. Her former husband emigrates to Paraguay. Frau von Eckenbrecher eventually takes a position in a German language school in Windhoek, the capital city, and rears her two sons there. In her book she chronicles colonial life, the natives of the colony, how the Spanish Influenza pandemic raged in Namibia, World War I in Africa, German surrender, and the South African occupation of German South West Africa and the eventual ceding of the colony to South Africa. The editors bring the memoir to a close with an update of Frau von Eckenbrecher's later life and death, and a short remembrance from one of her two grandsons.

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