

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE0654

Miller, Emma

(1839 - 1917)

Born 26 June, 1839, Chesterfield Derbyshire England

Died 22 January, 1917, Toowoomba Queensland Australia

Occupation Suffragist, Union organiser, Women's rights activist

Summary

Emma Miller was foundation president of the Woman's Equal Franchise Association between 1894 and 1905. The vote for women in Queensland State elections was finally won in 1905; women had had the right to vote in Federal elections since Federation, and voted for the first time in the 1903 Federal election. On 2 February 1912, known as Black Friday, at the height of a general strike, Miller led a contingent of women to Parliament House, avoiding police with fixed bayonets. The women were charged by baton swinging police on their return from Parliament House. Miller reputedly stuck her hatpin into a horse ridden by the Police Commissioner, Patrick Cahill. Cahill fell from his horse and claimed to have been permanently injured. Direct political action was not Miller's only cause. She was anti-militarist and opposed conscription in World War I. She believed that 'those who make the quarrel should be the only ones to fight'. As vice-president of the Women's Peace Army, Miller attended the Peace Alliance Conference in Melbourne in 1916. She also fought hard for free speech and civil liberties. During the First World War, Miller preached equal pay to those fearing that women would take the jobs of men away at the war.

Events

1970 - 1970

Married Jabez Mycroft Silcock (dec.), they had four children

1970 - 1970

Married William Calderwood (dec. 1880)

1970 - 1970

Migrated to Brisbane

1970 - 1970

Married Andrew Miller (dec. 1897)

1970 - 1970

Helped to form a female workers' union

1970 - 1970

Gave evidence to the Royal Commission into Shops, Factories and Workshops

1970 - 1970

Marched with shearers' strike prisoners when released

1970 - 1905

Foundation president of the Woman's Equal Franchise Association

2012 - 2012

Led a contingent of women to Parliament House on 'Black Friday'

1903 - 1903

President of the Women Workers' Political Union

1908 - 1908

Delegate to the Commonwealth Labor conference

2017 - 2017

The flag at Brisbane's Trade Hall flew at half mast when Emma Miller died

2022 - 2022

A publicly funded marble bust was unveiled in the Trades Hall

1916 - 1916

Delegate to the Australian Peace Alliance conference

1916 - 1917

Campaigned against the conscription referendums

Published resources

Resource Section

Miller, Emma (1839-1917), Young, Pam, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A100497b.htm>

Women in Australia's Working History, 2003,
http://www.australianworkersheritagecentre.com.au/07_education/working_women.htm

Miller, Emma (1839 - 1917), Elford, Ross G., 2002,
<http://www.atua.org.au/biogs/ALE1200b.htm>

Family rediscovers grandma suffragette, Jones, Chris, 2001,
<http://www.thecouriermail.com.au/extras/federation/CMFedMiller.htm>

Book

Proud to be a rebel : the life and times of Emma Miller, Young, Pam, 1926-, 1991

Votes for women : the Australian story, Lees, Kirsten., 1995

Book Section

Emma Miller, Young, Pam, 1988

Edited Book

Australian Feminism: A Companion, Caine, Barbara, Gatens, Moira et al., 1998

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Worth Fighting For!, Fryer Library with research by Yorick Smaal, 2005,
https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20050708180233/http://www.library.uq.edu.au/fryer/worth_fighting/

Site Exhibition

The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders>

Archival resources

National Library of Australia

[Biographical cuttings on Emma Miller, suffragette, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

John Oxley Library, Manuscripts and Business Records Collection

[OM64-13 Workers Educational Association of Queensland Records 1913-1932](#)

Author Details

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