

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE3971

Hall, Eliza Rowdon

(1847 - 1916)

Born	26 November, 1847, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Died	14 February, 1916, Potts Point Sydney New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Philanthropist

Summary

In 1912, Eliza Hall used her inheritance to establish the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust. Funds were distributed in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. A significant proportion of Victoria's share went toward the establishment of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne.

Details

Eliza Rowdon Kirk was born in Melbourne, the eldest daughter of George Kirk (a Yorkshire-born butcher) and his wife Elizabeth, née Wippell. In 1874 she married Walter Russell Hall. Walter was born in Herefordshire, England, and arrived in Sydney with little money. He became an agent for Cobb & Co., taking over the firm with James Rutherford and others in 1861. By the time he left Cobb & Co. in the mid-1880s he was a wealthy man. From here his wealth grew via an investment in the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Co. Ltd., registered with a capital of £1 million in 1886. Walter Hall made many anonymous donations to institutions and individuals including a gift of £1,000 to charities when his horse Reviver won the Metropolitan in 1900. He gave £5,000 to the Patriotic Fund during the war in South Africa and £10,000 to the Dreadnought Fund.

Walter and Eliza had no children, but took care of two orphaned cousins. When Walter died in 1911 his estate was valued at £2,915,513 with Eliza his principal beneficiary. Shortly afterwards she put aside £1 million to benefit the community in commemoration of her husband. She was persuaded to link her own name with her husband's in this endeavour, and the terms of the trust deed for the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust were made public in May 1912. The income was distributed according to the derivation of Walter's wealth: half went to New South Wales, one quarter to Queensland, and one quarter to Victoria. The deed was drawn up under Eliza's instructions and stipulated that income be used for the relief of poverty, advancement of education, advancement of religion (Church of England), and general benefit of the community. In each state, one third of the income was to be used for the benefit of women and children. A large share of Victoria's allocation went to the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Research in Pathology and Medicine in 1916.

On her death in 1916, Eliza bequeathed her estate – valued at £1,180,059 – to relations, friends and servants, with a number of pictures and statues left to the Melbourne and Sydney art galleries.

Published resources

Resource Section

Hall, Eliza Rowdon (1847-1916), 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A090695b.htm>

Thesis

In Her Gift: Activism and Altruism in Australian Women's Philanthropy, 1880-2005, Lemon, Barbara, 2008

Site Exhibition

In Her Gift: Women Philanthropists in Australian History, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2009,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/wiph/home.html>

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

Edited Book

Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, Dickey, Brian, 1994

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of New South Wales

[King family further papers, being mainly of Dr Hazel King regarding Kelso King, ca. 1841-1982](#)

Author Details

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