

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4057

Callen, Ann Agnes (Sister Mary Josephine)

(1858 - 1938)

Born 1 January, 1858, Kincumber, near Gosford New South Wales Australia

Died 31 December, 1938

Occupation Religious Sister

Summary

Sister Mary Josephine was one of the first six nuns to form the Sisters of Mercy at Broken Hill, New South Wales.

Details

The first six nuns to arrive in Broken Hill came from Singleton in the Diocese of Maitland, and founded the St Joseph's Convent in February 1889. They were: Ann Agnes Callen (Sister Mary Josephine), Margaret Hennessy (Sister Mary Clement), Sarah Gallagher (Sister Mary Gertrude), Ellen Dwan (Sister Mary Patrick), Margaret Morris (Sister Mary Ita) and Mary Griffin (Sister Mary Evangelist). Sister Mary Josephine was appointed Reverend Mother of the Sisters of Mercy by Bishop Dunne.

Ann Agnes Callen, as she was born, was educated by the Dominican nuns in Newcastle and took up a teaching position at the Denominational School at Scone. She entered the Singleton Convent in 1878, as did her sister Bridget two years later. Professed in 1880, Sister Mary Josephine spent some time at the Morpeth Convent and was thirty years of age when she moved to Broken Hill. There she served as Reverend Mother for sixteen years. From 1902 to 1907 she was at the Mt Barker Convent. She returned as Superior of the South Broken Hill Convent from 1912 to 1919 and again from 1929 to 1932 with a stint at Brighton, South Australia, in the interim.

Under the leadership of Sister Mary Josephine, the Sisters of Mercy visited the sick and poor of Broken Hill, provided a home for orphans, and opened five schools in the town by 1896. Later, in the 1930s, Sister Mary Josephine designed a series of correspondence lessons in religion for children living in remote areas.

Published resources

Book

Some Outstanding Women of Broken Hill and District, Camilleri, Jenny, 2002

A guide to the records of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia, Ryan, Mary, 1984

Site Exhibition

Unbroken Spirit: Women in Broken Hill, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2009,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/bh/bh-home.html>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Author Details

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