

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4060

Dwan, Ellen (Sister Mary Patrick)

(1866 - 1891)

Born 1 January, 1866, Borrishleigh, near Templemore Ireland

Died 16 May, 1891, Broken Hill New South Wales Australia

Occupation Religious Sister

Summary

Sister Mary Patrick 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. Under her leadership, they visited the sick and poor of Broken Hill, provided a home for orphans, and opened five schools in the town by 1896.

Ellen Dwan was raised near Templemore in Ireland, and would have known of Sister Mary Clement's departure for Australia in the early 1880s. Ellen herself was educated at the St Brigid's Missionary School at the Convent of Mercy Callen in County Kilkenny with a view to joining the Australian Mission. With other Postulants – including Margaret Moris – she made the journey to enter the Singleton Novitiate in November 1885. Days after being received as Sister Mary Patrick in July 1886, she departed for Braxton and became a founding member of the Braxton Convent. She spent some time at the Scone Convent before being professed at Singleton on 24 September 1888, and volunteered to join the Broken Hill Community.

Sister Mary Patrick was in Broken Hill for just two years before she died from heart disease exacerbated by influenza contracted during visits to the sick.

Published resources

Book

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

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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