

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0009

Berry, Alice Miriam

(1900 - 1978)

Born	28 April, 1900, Sydney New South Wales Australia
Died	18 September, 1978, Brisbane Queensland Australia
Occupation	Community worker

Summary

Alice Berry understood the problems of living in rural Australia and was committed to finding ways to improve the lives of women and children in rural areas. Through her work in the Country Women's Association in Queensland, and in the Associated Country Women of the World, she made a lasting contribution to the provision of services in country areas. She was appointed to The Order of the British Empire – Dames Commander on 01 January 1960 for Service to country women.

Details

Alice Berry spent her early years in country New South Wales and attended a one-teacher school at Cobar, where her father, Charles Roy McKenzie, was the gold-mine manager. She continued her education at the Waverley Superior Public School, Sydney and later attended business college, where she gained secretarial skills. Her first position was as secretary to a real estate agent at Wentworthville.

She married Henry Berry, a wool classer, grazier and merchant, on 6 June 1921. He had served in World War I in the First Light Horse Regiment in the Middle East. They had two daughters and moved to a sheep property near Tumut, where they remained until 1927. Their next move was to Queensland for the health of one of their daughters and they settled on a property in the Mount Abundance District, near Roma. It was here that Alice Berry came to understand the problems women encountered in rural areas; for example, lack of facilities, poor roads and communication, spasmodic mail services and inadequate health care. She was aware of the role of the Country Women's Association (CWA) in improving life for women and children in rural Australia, and in 1928 she became a founding member and Secretary of the Mt Abundance branch of the CWA of Queensland.

The family moved to Woolabra in 1932, a 42,000 acre (16997ha) property in the Charleville district and Alice Berry continued with her CWA activities as well as her domestic duties. A self-reliant woman, she worked energetically for education, mothers' hostels, the aerial medical service and access to seaside cottages.

During World War II she extended her activities to include work for the Red Cross Society and the Australian Comforts Fund. She was also a Commissioner of the Girl Guides' Association.

Due to her husband's ill health they returned to live in Brisbane, but she remained the CWA's councillor for the Western Division in Queensland. In 1948, she was appointed state international officer and after Henry's death took over the management of Woolabra.

Her appointments included deputy president of the state CWA (1951-1952), president of the associated Country Women of the World (1953-1959), president of the Queensland CWA (1961-1962), and national president of the CWA in 1962.

She was appointed OBE in 1954 and DBE in 1960. In 1971 she was made a member of honour of the Australian Country Women of the World (ACWW). On retirement in 1963, she worked for ten years on the Country Women's Association's archives.

Published resources

Book Section

Berry, Dame Alice Miriam, DBE, 1965

Book

The Many Hats of Country Women: The Jubilee History of the Country Women's Association of Australia, Stevens-Chambers, Brenda, 1997

Site Exhibition

Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html>

Resource Section

Berry, Dame Alice Miriam (1900 - 1978), Taylor, Helen, 2006,

<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A130202b.htm>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

NULL

[Alice Berry Cuttings Collection](#)

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection

[Records of the Country Women's Association of Australia, 1945-1969, 2003 \[manuscript\]](#)

Author Details

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