

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: PR00229

Griffith, Mary Harriett (1849 -1930)

Occupation Community worker, Temperance advocate, Welfare worker

Summary

Mary was known for her selfless work in the Brisbane community. She was a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and became founding secretary of the Brisbane Benevolent Society, which helped people in distress following the disastrous floods in south-east Queensland in 1893. She was honorary secretary (vice-president 1912-28) of the committee of Lady Musgrave Lodge, a home for nurses and single female immigrants. As Queensland representative for the Travellers' Aid Society, she maintained contact with the British Women's Emigration League. She served on the ladies' management committee of the Hospital for Sick Children in 1894 – 1924.

Mary was president of the Young Women's Christian Association of Brisbane (1902-12), honorary president to 1921, then honorary life president. She was vice-president of the Queensland division of the British (Australian) Red Cross Society during World War I and in 1921 patroness of St David's Welsh Society of Queensland—Sir Samuel had been founding patron in 1918. Other organizations to which she contributed her intelligence and energy were the National Council of Women, the Brisbane City Mission, the Queensland auxiliary of the London Missionary Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Queensland Women's Electoral League, the Protestant Federation, the United Sudan Mission and the Charity Organisation Society. In 1911 she was appointed a lady of grace of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem and was invested at Government House, Brisbane.

Details

Mary was the third of five children of Rev. Edward Griffith (Congregational minister) and his wife Mary, nee Walker. She was also the older sister of (Sir) Samuel Griffith, premier of Queensland and first Chief Justice of Australia between the years 1845 – 1920. When Edward (Mary's father) accepted a call from the Colonial Missionary Society to found a Congregational Church at Ipswich, he and his family moved to Australia, New South Wales (Queensland). Mary was a gifted writer who contributed articles to church magazines, often anonymously, and compiled a tribute to her father, *Memorials of the Rev Edward Griffith* (Brisbane, 1892).

Published resources

Newspaper Article

Brisbane Courier, 10 July 1925, p. 17, 1925

Brisbane Courier, 13 December 1911, p. 11, 1911

Brisbane Courier, 2 May 1927, p. 14, 1927

Brisbane Courier, 29 July 1930, p. 18, 1930

Book

Samuel Walker Griffith, Joyce, R. B., 1984

Widening horizons: the YWCA in Queensland 1888-1988, Gillespie, Aline, 1995

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

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

John Oxley Library, Manuscripts and Business Records Collection

[OM90-37 Griffith Family Papers 1811-1932](#)

ANU University Archives

[Miss Mary Griffith](#)

[The Other Griffith - Mary Harriett](#)

Author Details

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