

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00234

Cable, Kate Louisa

(1899 - 1999)

Born 10 July, 1899, Fanning Siding Queensland Australia

Died 6 July, 1999, Townsville Queensland Australia

Occupation Mail agent, Postmistress

Summary

Kate Cable was the longest serving postmistress in Australia. On 1 July 1927 she was appointed postmistress at Macrossan, on the Flinders Highway, west of Townsville, earning 15/- per week.

Kate outlived the official history records of the postal service of Queensland. Her 59 years service at the Macrossan post office officially ended when the exchange went automatic on 31 March 1986; however Kate continued to maintain her links with Australia Post and the district, acting as Community Mail Agent for the collection and distribution of mail. Her duties as a postmistress involved sorting incoming and outgoing mail, banking, money orders and operating the old cordless pyramid switchboard.

Details

The Divisional Manager of Australia Post, Don Watson, presented Kate Cable with a plaque depicting a sketch of the early type of pyramid switchboard, to commemorate her 59 years of service at the Macrossan post office. The cordless pyramid switchboard was removed when Macrossan became an automatic exchange in March 1986. The busiest time with telephone communications for Kate was when the Second Field Supply Battalion of the Royal Australian Air Force and the army established bases at Macrossan during World War II. The bases were connected to the Macrossan telephone exchange. The first subscriber to be linked to the exchange was Fanning Downs Station.

The population of Macrossan fluctuated over time with the most significant decrease occurring in 1928 when the Burdekin Meatworks closed. The number of residents went from 300 to 30. In 1961 the town was once again revived when 300 to 400 men moved into the district to construct the new railway bridge and traffic bridge, which took approximately 6 years. Macrossan now only consists of 10 families.

When she was 7 years old Kate had her leg amputated as a result of being bitten by a Black Whip snake when living near Ingham. Doctors told her parents that she would not live past 14, but the indomitable Kate proved them wrong and lived to 4 days short of her 100th birthday. She married Thomas William Cable, a direct descendant of Henry Cable and Susannah Holmes, convicts sent to Botany Bay in 1788. A parcel of goods valued at £20 belonging to the couple was plundered on the voyage, and Cable won damages of £15 against the captain, Duncan Sinclair, of the *Alexander*, in the first civil suit heard in New South Wales.

Published resources

Newspaper Article

Townsville Bulletin, 16 March 1990, Anna Cahill, 1990

Townsville Bulletin, 9 July 1999, p. 3, 1999

The Northern Miner, 9 July 1999, p. 8

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Private Hands (These regards may not be readily available)

Private collection of Carrie Bell, granddaughter of Kate Cable

Author Details

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