The Australian
Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0654

Miller, Emma

(1839 - 1917)

Born	18390626, Chesterfield Derbyshire England
Died	19170122, Toowoomba Queensland Australia
Occupation	Suffragist, Union organiser, Women's rights activist

Summary

Emma Miller was foundation president of the Woman’s Equal Franchise Association between 1894 and 1905. The vote for women in Queensland State elections was finally won in 1905; women had had the right to vote in Federal elections since Federation, and voted for the first time in the 1903 Federal election. On 2 February 1912, known as Black Friday, at the height of a general strike, Miller led a contingent of women to Parliament House, avoiding police with fixed bayonets. The women were charged by baton swinging police on their return from Parliament House. Miller reputedly stuck her hatpin into a horse ridden by the Police Commissioner, Patrick Cahill. Cahill fell from his horse and claimed to have been permanently injured. Direct political action was not Miller’s only cause. She was anti-militarist and opposed conscription in World War I. She believed that ‘those who make the quarrel should be the only ones to fight’. As vice-president of the Women’s Peace Army, Miller attended the Peace Alliance Conference in Melbourne in 1916. She also fought hard for free speech and civil liberties. During the First World War, Miller preached equal pay to those fearing that women would take the jobs of men away at the war.

Events

1922 - 1922
A publicly funded marble bust was unveiled in the Trades Hall

1916 - 1917
Campaigned against the conscription referendums

1916 - 1916
Delegate to the Australian Peace Alliance conference

1908 - 1908
Delegate to the Commonwealth Labor conference

1894 - 1905
Foundation president of the Woman's Equal Franchise Association

1891 - 1891
Gave evidence to the Royal Commission into Shops, Factories and Workshops

1890 - 1890
Helped to form a female workers' union

1912 - 1912
Led a contingent of women to Parliament House on 'Black Friday'

1891 - 1891
Marched with shearers' strike prisoners when released

1886 -
Married Andrew Miller (dec. 1897)

1857 - 1857
Married Jabez Mycroft Silcock (dec.), they had four children

1874 -
Married William Calderwood (dec. 1880)

1879 -
Migrated to Brisbane

1903 - 1903
President of the Women Workers' Political Union

1917 - 1917
The flag at Brisbane's Trade Hall flew at half mast when Emma Miller died

Published resources

Resource Section
Miller, Emma (1839-1917), Young, Pam, 2006,
http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A100497b.htm

Women in Australia's Working History, 2003,
http://www.australianworkersheritagecentre.com.au/07_education/working_women.htm

Miller, Emma (1839 - 1917), Elford, Ross G., 2002,
http://www.atua.org.au/biogs/ALE1200b.htm

Family rediscovers grandma suffragette, Jones, Chris, 2001,
http://www.thecouriermail.com.au/extras/federation/CMFedMiller.htm

Book
Proud to be a rebel : the life and times of Emma Miller, Young, Pam, 1926-, 1991

Votes for women : the Australian story, Lees, Kirsten., 1995

Book Section
Emma Miller, Young, Pam, 1988

Edited Book
Australian Feminism: A Companion, Caine, Barbara, Gatens, Moira et al., 1998

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988,
https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20071105022623/http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/78644/20071105-1315/www.200australianwo

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Worth Fighting For!, Fryer Library with research by Yorick Smaal, 2005,
https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20050708180233/http://www.library.uq.edu.au/fryer/worth_fighting/

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

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Emma Miller, suffragette, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

John Oxley Library, Manuscripts and Business Records Collection
OM64-13 Workers Educational Association of Queensland Records 1913-1932

Author Details
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