Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0899

Lake, Serena Thorne

(1842 - 1902)

Born	18421001, Devon United Kingdom
Died	19021231, South Australia Australia
Occupation	Missionary, Preacher, Social reformer, Suffragist

Summary

Serena Thorne was born in Devon in October 1842, daughter of Samuel and Mary Thorne. In 1865 the church sent her to Queensland to help establish Bible Christianity and she arrived in South Australia in 1870, preaching throughout the colony from church halls to street corners. In March 1871 she married Octavius Lake whom she had known in Devon and they worked together to further Bible Christianity in South Australia. Serena Lake attended the foundation meeting of the South Australian Women's Suffrage League in 1888 and was appointed to the Council. In 1889 the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) appointed her to the dual positions of Colonial organizer and Suffrage superintendent. In 1891 she was made a life vice-president of the WCTU. She died in 1902 aged 60.

Details

Serena Thorne was born in Devon in October 1842, daughter of Samuel and Mary Thorne. Her grandfather, William O'Bryan was founder and co-organizer of the Bible Christian Church which welcomed women preachers. By the age of twenty one Serena Thorne had already become well known throughout Devon, Cornwall and South Wales as a preacher. In 1865 the church sent her to Queensland to help establish Bible Christianity and in 1870 she moved first to Victoria and South Australia soon after. She received a warm welcome in South Australia and preached at churches in Adelaide and country areas. In March 1871 she married Octavius Lake whom she had known in Devon and they worked together to further Bible Christianity in South Australia. They had seven children of whom only one survived. Serena Lake attended the foundation meeting of the South Australian Women's Suffrage League and was appointed to the Council. She was almost certainly a member of the Social Purity Society as she was familiar with the background of the League's foundation. In 1889 the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) appointed her to the dual positions of Colonial organizer and Suffrage superintendent. In 1891 she was made a life vice-president of the WCTU. At the 1892 annual South Australian Women's Suffrage League meeting she spoke eloquently in support of Mary Lee's report, seconded by Catherine Helen Spence. After this, however, she did not appear again in either the League or WCTU records and when suffrage was won the Lakes were at Moonta in country South Australia carrying on their missionary and pastoral work. She died in 1902 aged 60.

Published resources

Book
In her own name : women in South Australian history, Jones, Helen, 1926-, 1986

Book Section
Serena Thorne Lake (1842-1902), 2001

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of South Australia
Woman's Christian Temperance Union of South Australia : SUMMARY RECORD

Author Details
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