Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4059

Gallagher, Sarah (Sister Mary Gertrude)

(1868 - 1947)

Born	18680101, Newcastle New South Wales Australia
Died	19470119, Australia
Occupation	Religious Sister

Summary

Sister Mary Gertrude was one of the first six nuns to form the Sisters of Mercy at Broken Hill, New South Wales.

Details

The first six nuns to arrive in Broken Hill came from Singleton in the Diocese of Maitland, and founded the St Joseph's Convent in February 1889. They were: Ann Agnes Callen (Sister Mary Josephine), Margaret Hennessy (Sister Mary Clement), Sarah Gallagher (Sister Mary Gertrude), Ellen Dwan (Sister Mary Patrick), Margaret Morris (Sister Mary Ita) and Mary Griffin (Sister Mary Evangelist). Sister Mary Josephine was appointed Reverend Mother of the Sisters of Mercy by Bishop Dunne. Under her leadership, they visited the sick and poor of Broken Hill, provided a home for orphans, and opened five schools in the town by 1896.

Sarah Gallagher was raised in Murrurrundi and educated by the Singleton Sisters of Mercy and the Dominican Sisters at Tamworth. She entered the Singleton Convent in 1885, a year behind her own sister Margaret (Sister Mary Claude). A year after she was professed, Sister Mary Gertrude joined the Sisters of Mercy at Broken Hill. She was 21 years of age and appointed Mistress of Novices. For the next 45 years, Sister Mary Gertrude worked with the Community. She was Superior of the Broken Hill Convent from 1902 to 1907, and returned to Broken Hill from 1911 to 1917 and 1923 to 1928. She spent some years leading the Mt Barker Community in the interim, and sent a group of Sisters to found the Brighton Community in 1925. She was founding Superior of the Condobolin Community in 1929, and was appointed in 1932 as the first Mother General of the Amalgamated Sisters of mercy of Wilcannia-Forbes, which position she held until a few weeks before her death.

Published resources

Book
A guide to the records of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia, Ryan, Mary, 1984

For Whom Alone We Go Forward or Stay Back: A History of the Sisters of Mercy, Wilcannia-Forbes Congregation, 1884-1959, Ryan, Mary, 2004

Some Outstanding Women of Broken Hill and District, Camilleri, Jenny, 2002

Site Exhibition
Unbroken Spirit: Women in Broken Hill, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2009, http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/bh/bh-home.html

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

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