Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4263

Bett, Mary Ann Latto

(1879 - 1968)

Born	18790101, Dundee Scotland
Died	19680731, Ulverstone Tasmania Australia
Occupation	Nurse, Sunday school teacher

Summary

Although a nursing service commenced in Oodnadatta in 1907, a hospital wasn't opened there until 1911. It came under the gamete of Australian Inland Mission activities and was the organisation's first bush hospital. The first nursing sisters to serve there were also both Deaconesses trained at the Presbyterian training institute in Melbourne

Only five foot tall and seven stone (45 kg) wringing wet, 'Little Sister' Mary Ann 'Latto' Bett arrived in Oodnadatta in March of 1910. Her arrival was keenly awaited by the local doctor, who had a number of sick men in outback communities to attend to. Known as 'The little angel of the north', she worked there for four years, as a nurse, preacher, teacher and Sunday School mistress. Perhaps her greatest attribute was her ability to relate with ease to the rough and ready people she encountered in the outback.

She left Oodnadatta to serve as an Army nurse in the Great War. She was discharged from the service in 1918 upon marriage to Lieutenant William Paul Boland in London. They returned to Australia to settle in Seymour and later lived in Melbourne. She died in Ulverstone, Tasmania in 1968.

Published resources

Book
Flynn's Outback Angels: Casting the Mantle - 1901 to World War II, Rudolph, Ivan, 2001

Not to be ministered unto: The story of Presbyterian deaconesses trained in Melbourne, Ritchie, Catherine I., 1998

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Sister M. A. Latto Bett, Nursing Sister, Oodnadatta. 1912-1913. Army nurse in World War I, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra
Bett Mary Ann Latto : SERN SISTER : POB Dundee Scotland : POE N/A : NOK F Bett William Cunningham

Author Details
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