Entry type: Person
Entry ID: PR00177

Brentnall, Elizabeth

(1830 - 1909)

Born	18300918, Mansfield Nottinghamshire England
Died	19090430, Brisbane Queensland Australia
Occupation	Political activist

Summary

Elizabeth Brentnall was state president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in Queensland from 1886 to 1899 and afterwards an honorary life president until her death in 1909. She first called for women's suffrage in her presidential address to the WCTU annual convention in 1888. The WCTU formed a separate suffrage department in 1891.

Details

Forceful, eminently capable and with fine organisational ability, Elizabeth Brentnall had been mistress of a large girl's school before her marriage. She was the daughter of a storekeeper in Mansfield, Nottingham. In 1867 she left her position as headmistress of the Wesleyan day school for girls at Bacup, Lancashire, and followed Frederick Thomas Brentnall to Sydney where they married.

Frederick Brentnall, a moral extremist, opposed votes for women, except with the property qualification, which placed him in direct opposition to his wife's political ideology. Elizabeth and Frederick had two daughters; Flora, who in 1893 married Edgar Bridal Harris, a well established shipping agent, and Charlotte Amelia. Like her mother, Flora, was a confirmed suffragist and 'Y' organiser for the WCTU.

Published resources

Book
A Journalist's Memories, Browne, Spencer, 1927

Resource
Who's Who in Brisbane 1900?, Centenary of Queensland Women's Suffrage 2005, 2005,
http://www.emsah.uq.edu.au/awsr/Act_Centenary/whoiswho.htm

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Site Exhibition
The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders

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