Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0086

Henry, Alice

(1857 - 1943)

Born	18570321, Melbourne Victoria Australia
Died	19430215, Malvern Victoria Australia
Occupation	Feminist, Journalist, Lecturer, Trade unionist, Writer

Summary

Alice Henry was a feminist journalist and union activist who became a prominent and respected figure in the American women's and trade union movements in the early twentieth century.

Details

Alice Henry was the daughter of Scottish born migrants to Australia who she credits with ensuring that she developed a passionate commitment to social justice issues. She received a good, progressive education but was denied access to a university education. Nevertheless, she accepted the need to support herself, so Henry first tried teaching but then turned to journalism after a serious illness. She published her first article in 1884. For the next twenty years she wrote for the *Argus*, the *Australasian*, and occasionally other newspapers and overseas journals, under her own name or a pseudonym, 'A.L.F.', 'Wyuna', or 'Pomona'.

At the age of 48 she embarked on an overseas tour which took in the United Kingdom and the United States. Unable to find work in England, she arrived in the United States in December 1905. Her knowledge of the Australian feminist and labour movements attracted the attention of the prominent reformer Margaret Dreier Robins. She invited Henry to work for the National Women's Trade Union League of America (W.T.U.L.) in Chicago where, as lecturer, as field-worker organizing new branches, and as journalist, she became a key figure in the campaign for woman suffrage, union organization, vocational education, and labour legislation in the United States.

In 1908, she began to edit the women's section of the *Chicago Union Labor Advocate*, and in January 1911 became the founding editor of the W.T.U.L.'s monthly *Life and Labor*, where she remained as editor (working with Australian novelist Miles Franklin) until 1915. She served in a variety of ways and positions at W.T.U.L. including investigating the conditions of woman brewery workers (1910), author of *The Trade Union Woman* (1915), field organizer (1918-20), and director of the education department (1920-22). She returned to Melbourne temporarily in 1925 to address meetings and urge the importance of combining unionism and feminism. This visit inspired women to form an organisation similar to her own in Melbourne in July 1925, named the Women's Trade Union League.

Henry retired to Santa Barbara, California, in 1928. She returned to Melbourne in 1933 and died there ten years later.

Published

The Trade Union Woman, 1915
Women and the Labor Movement, 1925

Published resources

Article
Alice Henry Investigates, Cervini, Erica, 2000,
http://fifth.estate.rmit.edu.au/November00/henry.htm

Book
Alice Henry : The Power of Pen & Voice The Life of an Australian-American Labour Reformer, Kirby, Diane, 1991

Getting Equal: the History of Australian Feminism, Lake, Marilyn, 1999

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Resource Section
Henry, Alice (1857-1943), Kirkby, Diane, 2006,
http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A090273b.htm

Edited Book
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

Site Exhibition
The Women's Pages: Australian Women and Journalism since 1850, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2008,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/cal/cal-home.html

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

Archival resources

Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection
Fred Coleman-Browne - papers, including papers of his wife, Eileen Powell, ca.1871-1968

Miles Franklin - Papers, 1841-1954

National Library of Australia, Manuscript Collection
Papers of Kate Baker, 1893-1946 [manuscript]

Papers of Alice Henry, 1873-1943 (bulk 1873-1943) [manuscript]

Papers of Alice Henry, 1873-1943

Royal Historical Society of Victoria Inc
Alice Henry 1857-1943 - Annotated Guide

Alice Henry papers

State Library of New South Wales
Papers relating to Alice Henry, ca. 1901-1903

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